

SEWANEE REVIEW

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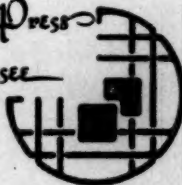
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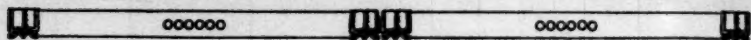


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EDITED BY

WILLIAM S. KNICKERBOCKER

ASIDES AND SOLILOQUIES

OBSESSION with the present breakdown of our economic structure, which is only one of several evidences of an age of chaos and futility, has become a conventionalized theme of current literature, here and in England. Confusion, if not anarchy grips the imagination of the more radical experimenters in drama, poetry, and the novel, as if the mere reflection of the passing world like the shadows in the mirror of the Lady of Shalott were the sole obligation of the creative writer. True, there may be a cathartic effect in the vigorous experiments, like T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*, James Joyce's *Ulysses*, and Gertrude Stein's *Three Saints in Four Acts*: spasmodic as they are, they may hasten and diffuse a sense of the shallowness of our contemporary civilization by retaining in the literary forms the splintered remnants of a world-view built up in the last century. True, too, there may be a pragmatic necessity for recurrent periods of confusion so that the creative spirit may get a new start and not be hampered by the cumulated standards and restraints which jelly into rigidity and strangle the necessary freedom of the plastic imagination.

But the question now arises: has not the moment come for a vigorous recoil; for the formulation of new creative objectives, and for a brave thrust forward? If so, then there are some significant words which Matthew Arnold, as a young poet, wrote in

1853 and which sound as if they were penned today: "People of disciplined minds", he said, "do not talk of their mission, nor of interpreting their age, nor of the coming Poet; all this, they know, is the mere delirium of vanity; their business is not to praise their age, but to afford to the men who live in it the highest pleasure of which they are capable of feeling". The young poet, he continued, "will not . . . maintain a hostile attitude towards the false pretensions of his age; he will content himself with not being overwhelmed by them".

Words like these come with peculiar grace just now. For, certainly, here in America at least, colleges and universities are the natural centers of creative endeavor. Only by a poetic and fanciful metaphor may they be called "cloistered academies"; they have their beauty, to be sure, and quiet if one wants to find it; but the tides of modernity have swept every one of them, and the cyclones of novel ideas permeate the most resistant. The young writer finds himself in a current of ideas, but his problem is to be exposed without being overwhelmed by them. If he is a poet he will, as an exercise of deliverance, seek the fulfillment of his powers by creative expression. He will seek to consolidate his mind and his personality by the active and persistent act of writing. He will secure a cumulative satisfaction by the ardours of creation; by the high and imperial gestation of his soul in poetry.

BUT the creation of poetry may be a binder, as well as a liberator. It is so subtly conditioned by taste or habitual preferences that it may tend to fix, to arrest, the wholesome expansion of the individual when it is not an imitation of life but an imitation of poetic models. "I like what I have liked; and I write what I like" might be the formula of many young poets whose imitative habits are very strong. They prolong the echoes of past poetic achievement by others: of poems which may have present significance, but probably do not. Or they may imitate the more-talked-of poets today like Ezra Pound, T. S. Eliot, e. e. cummings, or John Crowe Ransom whose work is obviously the

fruitage of a violent dissociation from established poetic sensibilities. These last have taught us the secret of dissociation, and it is not unfair to apply to them and their influence what they have themselves so successively practised. If they have communicated anything or infected their disciples in any way, that communication or infection will take care of itself by the natural processes of consciousness and so whatever good they have achieved in poetic tradition will be normally absorbed into the stream without undue and sedulous imitation.

The young poet today, keenly conscious of some relation between himself and his age, finds himself in a precarious position. There has been an infoliation of poetic tradition: a recrudescence of meaning in verse, as distinguished from imagery or melody. He will be conscious of the completion of the Imagist Movement begun in 1912, developing from sharper sensuousness in Amy Lowell to the exhaustion of sensuousness in T. S. Eliot with a corresponding movement, derived from the French Symbolists (Rimbaud and Mallarmé chiefly) in the work of the Sitwells and of Allen Tate. Some efforts have been made with considerable ingenuity to relate this newer "metaphysical" verse with the Tradition of Donne (as George Williamson did in his wellknown book of that name which began as an essay in this quarterly) but analysis will show that what has resulted has been merely a jangling of metaphors from the collision of which meaning arises in the mind of the reader.

The young poet today, whose mind is filled with the best achievements of contemporary verse, will become aware of the antagonism between two conflicting traditions of poetry: the "communicative" and the "absolute".

COMMUNICATIVE poetry is that type best known to less venturesome lovers of poetry and is expounded in almost any treatise on the art of poetry used in poetry classes. Sidney Lanier's famous book is the classic instance. *The Science of English Verse* assumes that the sole function of poetry is to communicate to the reader the mood or ideas or intention of the poet and that whatever interrupts or obscures this constitutes a defect or a flaw in the verse. Poetry becomes then a mere medium for

the poet to create identical lyrical or meditative moods in his reader: it subjugates the reader to the poet on the tacit assumption that only some highly gifted individuals of divine genius are poets and that all others are subject to him for the celestial gift of poetic delight. At present, because of the dominance of "absolute" poetry, defenders of this theory are vigorously attacking what Max Eastman has called the poetry of "unintelligibility". The most recent attack is *Sense and Poetry* by John Sparrow (Yale Press). These protests (for they are more "protests" than criticisms) are equivalent to the new squeals against the New Deal.

The foremost critical expounder and apologist of "absolute" poetry is Allen Tate whose fugitive and uncollected articles, confused stylistically as they are, would constitute at least the memoranda or materials for an organon of this new "difficult" poetry. "Absolute" poetry fits into the frame of the older imagist movement by altering the effect of verbal images from sensuous recollection to the "moral" or "meaningful" effect of collided images in the mind of the reader. Whereas "communicative" poetry tacitly assumes the identity or similarity of psyches (that both poet and reader are automatically identical in their response to words, images, or recollections of sensuous experience; that by the "right word or phrase" poetry can instantaneously establish the poet's mood in the reader without loss or increase in communication by words), "absolute" poetry, conversely, assumes the relativity of psyches (their differences in response to verbal stimuli): that both poet and reader are unique and that psychologically it is impossible to communicate: that at best and preferably, the poet *evokes* an experience in the writing and the reader in the reading of his poem. The written poem is *absolute*: absolute because it is a novel and unique experience for the poet in the creation, and novel and unique to the reader who, except for the poem, would never have had the aesthetic or poetic experience. The poet, in short, in creating a poem creates a uniquely new beauty, an entirely new aesthetic mood or emotion in the act of composition: and that most successfully to do this he must in sovereign power put sensations, ideas, images, together which, though apparently nonsense to the reader committed to the con-

ventional communicative theory of poetry, collide and evoke a phantasmagoria out of which, or by means of which, his jelling consciousness will be excited to new awareness.

THE conjunction of these two poetic traditions presents an aesthetic situation which will have its effects in the young poetic mind by the creative power of tensions. Writing poetry has never been easy, but its satisfactions are secured by the creative mind moving among confusions, making beauty where beauty never was before. Young poets in colleges today, gifted as they are with a taste for abstractions mostly expended in the new physics and Marxism, may achieve for themselves an inner sense of power by daring to take the materials so freely in circulation and harmonizing them in achieving poems. This is the challenging situation. Poetry may again, if it is courageously met, become (not a major) but a vigorous and triumphant activity.

by Winfield H. Rogers

ALDOUS HUXLEY'S HUMANISM

MR. ALDOUS HUXLEY does not interpret life, on his own admittance, in those exciting and emotional terms which persuade the generality of men. His followers are confronted, moreover, with the astonishing fact that even some of the intellectual and sophisticated minority fail completely to understand or to like his work. Very few of Mr. Huxley's readers, apparently, take the trouble to discover the true implication and importance of his satire. As with all satire worthy the name, the reader must discover in this instance the point of view or philosophy that in the first place dictated the satiric criticism, which is, with novelists who are not also essayists, an inductive process of no little difficulty. Fortunately, to construct the positive philosophy from the negative material of satire, though entirely possible because his philosophy is implicit in each of his works, is not necessary with Mr. Huxley. In numerous essays and in isolated passages in his novels, he has clearly set forth his attitude. A true understanding of Mr. Huxley's philosophy indicates, contrary to the common American conception, that his novels are genuinely significant works; the unity of his thought, his intellectual acumen, his humanity, above all, his morality (for he describes immorality only to condemn it) become crystal clear. Mr. Huxley then stands out as one of the important social thinkers, as well as critics and creative writers, of our time.

The inability of many American readers to arrive at an understanding of Mr. Huxley's attitude, as well as of his importance, may be illustrated from several points of view. One intelligent reader of *Point Counter Point* pronounces it sewage; another, a scholar of distinguished ability, states, in effect, that readers put up with the immoralities of the book because of the author's intellectualism; a writer in one of the foremost learned journals emphasizes the scientific element in Huxley, without making clear

exactly what he means by this term. And other readers frankly are baffled. The American reader of Mr. Huxley, piqued at the foreign conception that Mr. Sinclair Lewis portrays accurately the American scene, might well consider that he is falling into a similar error. The exaggerated pictures drawn by either writer must be taken for what they are, satiric pictures or segments of their respective societies. The great difference between these two satirists, on the other hand, is that Mr. Huxley has a far more definite, an infinitely more valuable philosophy behind his criticism. His philosophy, though often formulated in intellectual terms, is shot through with emotional conviction. It is the product of a fine brain and a sane emotional attitude. This philosophy is inherent in all of Mr. Huxley's work, in every satiric portrait, in every comedy and tragedy of his novels. So completely does it dominate his work, that whatever he touches must in some way be brought into contact with it. It is this philosophy which dictated the essential pattern of *Point Counter Point* and which keeps it from being a mere literary freak.

II.

Mr. Huxley's attack on Wordsworth indicates at once the essential basis and sufficiency of his philosophy. Wordsworth, he believes, committed the unpardonable sin of making an intellectual generalization from the emotional particular. Not that the emotion itself was invalid, but the resulting rationalization has no validity, for it is "suspiciously anthropocentric". He recognizes and insists upon the small value of truth in the emotional experience, though condemning the poet for attempting to erect a life philosophy upon it. That most intellectual philosophies are ultimately based on emotional attitudes, he believes is natural and right and inevitable by virtue of their human origin; indeed, the emotion is given force and permanence through embodiment in an idea. Nevertheless, this basis assuredly must not be an emotional particular.

The emotional basis of his own philosophy Mr. Huxley expresses in various places,—Colman's statement in *Antic Hay*, for example. Late at night when he and his companions are walk-ink through the streets, Colman asks them to think of the "...

seven million distinct and separate individuals, each with distinct and separate lives and all completely indifferent to our existence . . ." who are about them. He asks them to think of the "Hundreds of thousands" experiencing similar activities and emotions; and yet " . . . they are all alive, all unique and separate and sensitive, like you and me." Mr. Huxley is definitely fascinated and influenced by the thought. This incongruous quality of life—its oneness and simultaneous diversity—is the basic emotional conception of his philosophy. It gives him his zest for life and his pessimism; it determines his philosophic position, which he defines as *pessimistic humanism*.

III.

The salient difference between the humanism of Mr. Huxley and that of the humanists of the school of the late Professor Irving Babbitt is found in Mr. Huxley's modernity, at the center of which is his reconciliation of the psychological and humanistic points of view. He can best be described as a "psychological humanist". Inherent in the term is the pessimism which he himself uses to describe his attitude. The terms of many so-called humanists seem vague and outmoded when compared to those of this psychological humanism. The fine humanistic tradition of the Greeks and the life worship of the Elizabethans are reinterpreted for the benefit of the twentieth century man in terms which he can understand.

The only facts, Mr. Huxley thinks, in which we can believe are psychological. In one sense these facts are only rationalizations, but in any case the only possible ones in the new state of mind of humanity. Everything else, apart from these psychological facts, I presume with the exception of the physical sciences, is either man's projection, in some way, of himself, or pure conjecture. Thus, with this irrational absolute, man's attention should be concentrated on his psychological well-being in the present. Our mode of living and our social institutions must be brought into harmony with the individual's psychological necessity. I do not think I am misinterpreting in saying that Mr. Huxley believes that our time has gives itself alternately to two tendencies, that of theorizing and that of living for the moment in an unreasonable

enjoyment of what he calls "direct perceptions and spontaneous feelings". In the mean between reflection and spontaneity we find that humanistic ideal.

The essential difference between this type of humanism and the purely psychological point of view may not, at this point, be clear. With Mr. Huxley, emphasis upon material psychology does not, as with many modern thinkers, lead him to anything approaching a materialistic, naturalistic, or behaviouristic outlook. To him the human spirit is distinct from the body; for, in comparison, the capacity of the spirit is limitless and subject to profound modification; the spirit is the result of all experience. This conception is a very adequate reconciliation of the findings of modern psychology to the individual sense of oneness. The capacity of the spirit gives a oneness to the obvious diversity within the individual man. Mr. Huxley's conception of sin illustrates the psychological basis, the profound modernity and the true nature of his philosophy. A sin is not a sin because it has been somewhere prohibited, but because it is hygienically unsound, either to the mind or body. On the other hand, the virtues might be described as those things which are hygienically sound because they make it possible for a man to develop his potentialities, unhindered by disease and agitation. Capacity for development, for modification on the part of the human entity, is the cornerstone of his humanistic philosophy. The reader of Mr. Huxley's work who emphasizes his scientific attitude, or his demand for scientific integrity in literature, should absorb his idea that scientific explanations are not the whole truth.

The balance between reflection and spontaneity, already mentioned, is part of the humanist's emphasis upon harmony within the individual. The individual, by varied functions, by participation in the diversity of the world, must develop his own diverse psychological constitution. Because, Mr. Huxley says in effect, they ignore important phases of individual life, philosophers, ascetics, money-grubbers, hard-headed business men, routine workers, commit suicide.

During the English Renaissance the representative man, in Mr. Huxley's mind, was the "life-worshipper", in other words, the humanist. This representative man came as near as is humanly

possible to the humanistic ideals of the "harmonious adult man". He was able to do this because he, as is Mr. Huxley, was concerned with this world almost to the exclusion of other interests. Unconsciously he made his mode of living fit his psychological facts, on the whole quite unconcerned with things beyond adequate explanation by man. The life-worshipper, for the most part, disregards eternal life and religion, finding life in this world quite sufficient in itself, and life an adequate reason for life. As man's nature prohibits such a contradiction as a homogeneously perfect life, he strives for as diversified a life as possible. In spite of all kinds of procrustean exercises on the part of man to achieve imaginary unity, human life reveals discontinuity and diversity. The conventional conception of perfection as conceived by the ascetic, the believer in social service, and the puritan, goes by the boards, for their perfection is self-annihilation which has no place in human life, in fact is not life at all. As the individual is actually many persons, he should sincerely try to be all of them. Man's almost infinite potentiality he should recognize and do his best to realize. His potentialities allow him to live in the universals of human experience rather than in the individual and one. The validity of the experience of oneness and simplicity, however, or even the occasional consciousness of oneness with the whole universe, though only true of one psychological experience, is not destroyed.

To this end of developing the harmonious adult man, of attaining perfection in all the diverse aspects of the human entity, our entire attention should be concentrated on this world. In realizing his potential humanity and primary duty to himself, it is necessary for man to keep himself at a pitch of efficiency which will allow him to give life to all his elements and latent capacities. The conscious mind, the instincts, and the body must be allowed life, so that man may become a perfect animal and a perfect human. The best life consists of: "Multiplicity of eyes and multiplicity of aspects seen." The right of all the diverse components of human nature to real life is important to Mr. Huxley. When he says that each man, by virtue of his heredity and his acquired habits is domiciled in several universes, he carries his sense of diversity to the extreme. Yet when he states that the whole of a single man's

universe is composed of a series of "non sequiturs", all connected by the individual, we begin to realize the emotional reality behind his idea.

All the elements of man, Mr. Huxley realizes, cannot be brought into play at any given time. He pleads that we lead the balanced life passionately. He counsels man to proceed to a realization of the various aspects of his being, balancing each by vital excess in every direction, balancing these excesses with moderation. The man most likely to achieve this ideal in civilized society Mr. Huxley believes is the gentleman, for it is the gentleman who most frequently achieves porportion in living. The love of life of the life-worshipper, it must be emphasized, by no means releases him from the necessity of selecting; the life-worshipper believes in intense life activity but not in indiscriminate activity.

A real bird's eye glance at Mr. Huxley's novels at this point reveals their true import and the significance of the satiric characterization. He believes that a great many modern writers, because of their reaction to the "excesses of popular art", and because they have confined themselves to "only a tiny fraction of existence" have neglected the important things in life. The inclusiveness, for example, of *Point Counter Point* is an attempt to indicate the diversity of human nature and human life, and implied plea, as well, that we do not let a single aspect of our beings dominate our lives. Each character who is satirically condemned in this novel, as well as in his other satiric works, in some way violates the humanistic code of the life-worshipper. Each in some way fails to be the harmonious adult man. Lucy Tantamount fails in life, for example, because of her overemphasis of one specialized physiological and psychological aspect of her being. Perhaps it is in this respect that Mr. Huxley thinks our age most errs. The realism of the time offers no check to the sexual impulse, which now achieves neither love, nor amusement, nor lasting significance. Lucy's father, also, remained undeveloped on all but one side of his personality. Out of the laboratory, except when listening to music, he is a complete child. One suspects that Mr. Huxley gave him his taste for music not only to lend verisimilitude to his satire, but to indicate undeveloped potentialities. Against the indiscriminate sensation-seeking of Lucy is opposed,

in *Point Counter Point*, the scientific impersonality—equally characteristic of our age—as it manifests itself in various characters, for example, in Phillip Quarles. Of Mr. Huxley's positive statements on this contemporary tendency I have already spoken. Strikingly, Mr. Huxley's deep conviction and sincerity cause him to turn whatever he touches into a humanistic document. He looks upon his novels, I believe, as he does upon poetry; they exist primarily as instruments "... for the modification of existence patterns".

IV.

Mr. Huxley has specifically stated what he considers to be the great menaces to modern society. They are (I suspect in the order of their importance in Mr. Huxley's mind): first, monotheism and the superhuman ideal; second, the worship of success and efficiency; third, the machine. Each of these, it should be emphasized, is a menace not of external nature, but each becomes menacing in proportion to its possible effects upon the internal man, as it becomes a menace from *within*. Mr. Huxley is not so much concerned with society as with the possible effects of it upon each of the ideals of an impossible superhumanness, as it has through the course of centuries developed, leads to an ignoring of the essential nature and diversity of man, and thus to emotional and intellectual suicide. Contemporary monotheism, particularly, offers no sustenance by which the individual may live. The ideal of "perfect humanity" is more healthy than the impossible striving for a superhumanness. Too often in the past have we allowed the sick in mind or body, those unbalanced in emotion or intellect, to lead us. The "neuralgia-metaphysic" of Pascal, for example, or the "asthma-philosophy" of Marcel Proust are equally odious to the healthy humanist.

To a certain extent the monotheistic ideal has obscured the truth, for it has, in the past, been uncondusive to "participative knowledge". Participative knowledge brings a knowledge of diversity which defeats the monotheistic ideal. Mr. Huxley hopes that man will turn from the worship of abstraction, which seems to be supplanting monotheism, to some form of polytheism. Modern society under the influence of science and the worship of ab-

stractions or rationalism is no longer a place where man can live fully and harmoniously. Against the very probable objection to the humanistic philosophy that under it a stable society would not be possible, Mr. Huxley cites the examples of the Greeks. Furthermore, he emphatically denies that man's exclusive concern with this world will lead to an acceptance of the advice of Horace and the Preacher to "swill, guzzle, and copulate". We can safely say that Mr. Huxley believes that the humanistic ideals and life are fully compensatory for the loss of religious fervour.

Mr. Huxley's philosophy is, in essence, an exposition of, and a plea for, a sense of proportion in the conduct of life. The Northerner he believes, has lost this more markedly than any other modern man. This is perhaps why Protestantism, far more monotheistic than Catholicism or the religions of the East, has gained its hold and present form here. His observation is that the Southern European and the Oriental have a greater sense of proportion, against which the Northern European and American has only his material development to counterpoise. One can imagine Mr. Huxley thinking that the northern intensity, the capacity for oneness of purpose, the inelasticity of mind, has brought physical accomplishment and dominance at the expense of the ability to lead a full and many-sided, a genuinely humanistic life.

V.

To many this philosophy of Mr. Huxley will undoubtedly seem lacking in one important aspect, that of social responsibility. His formulation of his attitude, however, undoubtedly has been dictated by his feeling of the great need in modern life for some sort of faith. To him, the most important faiths of the present day, the product of the new materialism, namely, Nationalism, Socialism, and Progress, are completely unsatisfactory. The selfishness of Nationalism is too obviously "unhumanistic" to need discussion. Socialism as the logical development of democracy holds nothing out to the humanist. Mr. Huxley believes in an intelligent oligarchy. "The ideal state," he says, "is one in which there is a material democracy controlled by an aristocracy of intellect—a state in which men and women are guaranteed a decent human existence and are given every opportunity to develop such talents

as they possess and where those with the greatest talent rule". To say, as has been said, that Mr. Huxley is an aristocrat—he is far too aware of the nature of snobbery to ever be one in the Thackerian sense—is misleading; he merely recognizes the unescapable fact that there is a great difference between man and man in respect to capacity and potentiality.

Progress, the third great faith of the present time, which makes happiness the end of life—actually happiness being only a by-product of life activity—is anathema to him. The pursuit of happiness under the banner of Progress leads inevitably to the killing of many of the individuals of which each human entity is made. Inevitably it calls for a subjugation of the personality to social ends. For this purpose great restraints have been placed on individuals. Political liberty and its concomitant ideals have succeeded in further entrapping the individual rather than in freeing him. Nevertheless Mr. Huxley is by no means without his social faith; his philosophy is far from hedonistic, far from the anthropocentrism toward which in his mind Wordsworth inclined. He believes in improving the conditions under which men live to a point at which it will be possible for every individual to lead the humanistic life. The sadness and painfulness of human life, and the comparative slowness with which change can come lead him into pessimism.

Phillip Quarles in *Point Counter Point* summarizes Mr. Huxley's attitude towards modern society. Quarles wrote: "The whole of modern civilization is based on the idea that the specialized function which gives a man his place in society is more important than the whole man, or rather is the whole man, all the rest being irrelevant or even (since the physical, intuitive, instinctive, and emotional part of man doesn't contribute appreciably to making money or getting on in an industrialized world) positively harmful and detestable." To compensate for the restraints placed upon him by the extant social ideals and to fill the leisure time produced by specialized functioning, man has surrounded himself with substitutes for real emotions. This compensation is necessary because of the worship of success and efficiency, which brought in its wake the exaltation of the machine with its concomitant, standardization. To the typical modern

thinker Utopia would be like what he has demonstrated in *Brave New World*. Indeed Mr. Huxley sees our ever increasing leisure and our supposedly greater liberty as dubious blessings. However, in answer to the dilemma produced by democratic, industrial and mechanical development, he pleads that we spend our time in being complete man. Over this prospect he is not too optimistic, for even education cannot mold the incorrigible. Continuous progress calls for an improvement in the "heritable qualities" of the human race and a decrease in population,—the first being particularly difficult to bring about with any degree of perceivable rapidity. Mr. Huxley deplores in a reasoned and philosophical manner the things decried time and time again by critics standing on quite different ground. Consistently he is humanistic, inevitably pessimistic. In his estimation real complete human beings are the *desiderata*, not newspaper readers, jazzers, radio fans. He deals in various ways, through satire in his novels and explicitly in his essays, with the futile dissipation of leisure by the substitution of the spurious for real human activities. The old pleasures of life, he finds, demanded intelligence and personal initiative, the new pleasures none. The members of a jazz band, he says, (and why not those who listen?) are not in any kind of relation to the decencies of human life. Further, he wonders if these decencies will not be completely dead in another generation. The modern good time and the modern substitutes for feeling, the newspaper, and the movies, have destroyed all emotional and intellectual initiative. In general our leisure is utterly inconsequential; consequently our lives are but waste lands.

This condemnation of life as it is led in the north of Europe and in America is not the usual superficial attack upon the materialism of western civilization, for Mr. Huxley is himself a materialist. That we should be interested in the actual world he believes is admirable; the fault of the majority is that they are not sufficiently interested in enough of the world, a world filled with intensely interesting phenomena. Our fault is that we are not materialistic enough. In other words, modern man is intent upon escaping from life, rather than upon seeking means of participating in life and of extending the life range. The great enemies, actually, of the humanistic philosophy are the members

of the middle class, for they are the fearful hypocrites afraid of the truth, and fearing things beyond their traditional spiritual and material range.

VI.

The philosophy of Mr. Huxley must be synthesized into the organic whole from which it came. As we see it in its isolated manifestations, a sharp eye, considerable curiosity and constructive power are required to discern its true importance. The humanism of Mr. Huxley, here set forth, differs from that of the noisier humanists contemporary with him in that it is rationally acceptable, clear in terminology, and more powerful in creative force. He makes us vitally aware of the enormous possibilities of life and living, of the opportunities in knowledge and art. The fact that we are on earth is quite enough. We must adventure, and gain knowledge, and advance—not necessarily for any particular reason—towards an unattainable goal. As a novelist, moreover, Mr. Huxley becomes extremely important when it is realized that he is among the remarkably small number of distinguished English and American novelists who have raised their work upon a coherent philosophy. With the realization that his novels have behind them a philosophy which is an acceptable working hypothesis for modern man, they become definitely significant. There are many who will agree with Mr. Huxley that the greatest need of our times is to make this humanistic philosophy generally assimilable.

by Allen W. Porterfield

PRAISE FOR PROFESSORS

OUR CULTURAL LEADERS FOR FIFTY YEARS.

ON December 27, 1883, about forty professors met at Columbia College, now Columbia University in the City of New York, for the purpose of discussing the best means by which the study and teaching of modern languages could be elevated to the rank that these gentlemen felt was due them. Lounsbury and Thomas, Cook and Brandt were among those present; and there was also that ever active scholar, A. Marshall Elliott (d. 1910) of Hopkins, to whom we now refer with veneration as the primary founder of the Modern Language Association of America, an organization that has grown to such huge proportions that the M. L. A. is as familiar to one army of Americans as the A. E. F. is to another.

President Barnard welcomed the convention to Columbia, referred to the great advances that had already been made in the teaching of French and German, and compared them with those of his own college days when for three months only, in the junior year, students were allowed to take one hour a week in either French, Hebrew, or integral calculus.

The convention sat for two days and nights, argued back and forth over the relative merits of modern as opposed to ancient languages, and debated hotly the precise type of journal that would be needed. Then it was that Elliott leaped into the breach with the news that however helpful a journal might be the first and most urgent need was that of some good teachers. In overdue time, the M. L. A. was organized with Franklin Carter, then President of Williams College, as president and Elliott as secretary. The men then went home, quite unconscious of the potential magnitude of the enterprise they had just launched.

That this took place only fifty years ago throws refulgent light on the evolution of our culture. One of America's seven great

blunders may be her refusal to join *the* League of Nations when she is made up of *a* league of nations. We are all immigrants; our oldest families are in only the twelfth generation. An Italian discovered the country, the British colonized it, we bought a part of it from the French and Spaniards, and the original boatload of Germans debarked at Philadelphia on October 6, 1683, almost exactly two hundred years previous to the founding of the M. L. A.

The teaching of Italian, English, French, Spanish, and German should then, one would think, have begun in the seventeenth century; it did not begin until well on in the nineteenth century. When Harvard was founded Corneille, Racine and Molière were already on the horizon; yet French was not taught at Harvard until 1816. Spanish was taught in but few colleges with anything even remotely approaching seriousness prior to the Spanish-American War.

Thomas Jefferson did to be sure establish a professorship at William and Mary in 1779. Modern languages were taught however nowhere in the southern states with studied intelligence until a century later. Amherst claims to be the first college to give real courses in French and German, 1824, and Pennsylvania claims to have had a professor of German as early as 1754. It remains nevertheless a fact that modern languages never received scientific or philological treatment in the United States until the founding of The Johns Hopkins graduate school in 1876. The M. L. A. was founded *at* Columbia, but *by* Hopkins.

Hopkins moved forward however for a quite subjective reason. The American Philological Association was founded at New York University on November 13, 1868, the meetings being held in the Brick Presbyterian Church: preachers were then also philologists. Its first formal meeting was held at Poughkeepsie in 1869. Although it did not exactly organize at the time an official publication, its *Transactions* have had a continued and fruitful existence ever since. They originally planned to cover seven fields, two of which were modern languages and literatures, and English language and literature.

Hopkins felt that this was not enough. Basil Gildersleeve and his colleagues founded therefore in 1880 the *American Journal of Philology*, which has always been and still is a Hopkins publica-

tion. Both of these journals opened their columns at first to M. L. A. men. Indeed some of the best articles in the early numbers were written by M. L. A. men. But these same men—and there were giants in those days—saw at once that unless they founded an organization of their own, and published a journal of their own, they would forever be obliged to play second fiddle in a concerto composed to the end that some classical scholar might have his papers presented with a more fetching accompaniment.

It was for this reason that Elliott and his colleagues founded the M. L. A., an organization that no longer needs to bow its head in the presence of its classical progenitor; the child has, in quite pleasant truth, long since outdistanced, in both size and service, its revered father.

At the meeting at Columbia in 1883, Elliott referred to one place where the professor of French also taught dancing, in order, we may assume, to perpetuate France's reputation for the aesthetic, and to the professor of German at another place who gave extra-mural courses on the preservation of the teeth, certainly by way of substantiating the established claim of German thoroughness.

Then came the M. L. A. Vol. I, No. I of its official organ gave in 250 pages a complete list of all members, a classified list of those who had attended the first meeting, a full account of all official transactions, and all the papers read at the meeting. In 1932, it required 158 pages merely to record the roll of members: 4,132 active, 39 honorary (foreign), and 309 libraries and institutes. There were 234 members in 1886, when James Russell Lowell was president. The "balance on hand" on December 31, 1891, was \$20.32.

At present the M. L. A. has an endowment of \$75,000 and takes in annually about \$25,000 in dues and subscriptions. And it has extended the very term "modern languages" far beyond easy initial recognition. Speaking at Louisville in 1927, A. H. Thorndike, then president, said:

Under the protection of our aegis are gathering languages whose applications for membership not even the secretary can read and poetries that are beyond the dissection of any known system of phonetics. What was designed as an ordi-


nary three-ringed circus has taken to itself innumerable side-shows.

The same is true, in more pleasing fashion, of the membership, which is no longer confined to those who teach. On some quite essential counts the M. L. A. is today the most imposing of the twelve great groups that make up the American Council of Learned Societies.

Some members of the M. L. A. never come out in the open with a published word. During the first year of the World War, Gilbert Murray delivered an address before the students of Barnard College, in which he stated, with an Englishman's sense of fair play, that if he knew much about the Classics, it was owing to the benefit he had derived from sitting at the head of Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, long Professor of Greek at the University of Berlin. When Wilamowitz was congratulated the other day on the 83 pages of his bibliography of scholarly works, he said: "Nonsense! That is simply stuff that I have sloughed off from my teaching, through which activity I derived my inspiration." It was his modesty that prevented him from saying that it was in turn his research work that had made his teaching inspiring.

But the majority of M. L. A. men write. Where do they publish? The most logical place would be the *Publications of the Modern Language Association*, now internationally referred to as the PMLA. Its fifty volumes, the more recent ones totalling nearly two thousand pages each, are impressive, but their story can be briefly told, for they symbolize the merest fraction of the M. L. A.'s general activity.

They contain the business proceedings, presidential addresses, and the papers. For the first five years, the main address was delivered by some alien dignitary, the president of the entertaining college or the governor of the state. Then came 1889 when Lowell became the keynoter. His address was really the first; and with somewhat disquieting uniformity the others have taken their cue from his. With astute Yankee wit and in a prose that lives, Lowell laid down the law. From any conceivable angle, he argued, the so-called modern languages and literatures are in no way inferior to the ancient. So far so good; but Lowell hastened to



add that his own grandson was making gratifying progress in Greek. That is the point: Compromise; lean on both sides of the fence, for the field is broad and the pastures green on either side.

A few of these addresses have been on rigidly erudite themes; a few have been personal, as when W. A. Neilson (Smith) told how it felt to be a college president and conceded that it was rather comfortable; a few have been humorously on the defensive, as when C. H. Grandgent (Harvard) spoke on the Dark Ages, meaning now; a few have been generally informative, as when G. O. Curme (Northwestern) showed how, by an act of Providence, this country was colonized by Englishmen who came over here when Shakespeare was thriving, from the southeastern part of England, when and where good English was spoken, otherwise we might now be speaking a language that no one could understand. And once in a while a presidential address is not published in the PMLA at all, as was the case with Hermann Collitz's on world languages (1925), meaning English, French, German, Latin, these four and no more, despite the round hundred attempts that have been made to make such artificial languages as Ido, Volapuk, Esperanto and ninety-seven others. Collitz's address was published in *Language*, the official organ of the Linguistic Society of America, an association that grew partly from the American Philological Society, partly from the M. L. A.

The World War had no pronounced effect in this connection. The idea, now that Europe was shot to pieces, that literary studies would have to come from a bull market over here was frowned on, and casual references were made to the war. Here is one by F. E. Schelling (Pennsylvania), in his presidential address of (1914):

God forbid that we shall ever exchange our scholars' gowns for invisible grey or earth-colored khaki!

The M. L. A. had 1,409 members in 1916, 1,473 in 1917, 1,472 in 1918, 1,490 in 1919, and 1,631 in 1920.

The papers themselves can also be disposed of without great space. For the first ten years much was written on American: French in Louisiana or dialects in West Virginia. The papers

were, too, during this period heavily pedagogical: What is the best method of teaching a modern language? But by about 1895, certainly by the close of the century, the PMLA had found itself, whereupon it settled down to a course from which it has deviated with not wholly reassuring infrequency.

There have been published in the PMLA 651 articles on English, 143 French, 82 German, 34 Spanish, 27 Italian, 26 Pedagogy, 104 Philology, 111 Comparative Literature, 10 Scandinavian, 1 Russian, and 89 miscellaneous. That was the complete record at the close of 1931, with the exception of Volume V, momentarily inaccessible. There is not a single article on Portuguese or Goethe's "Faust." But H. G. Wells wrote his "Outline of History" without once mentioning either Dante or Shakespeare. This does not square well with James Russell Lowell who contended that however virulent the Florentine plague may have been, since Boccaccio's "Decameron" grew out of it, the price was not too high. The women members have written but little. The first woman to publish an article in the PMLA was L. Mary McLear (California) on "The Riming System of Alexander Pope," 1891.

The direct influence of these papers, 1,287 here recorded (about 1,500 all told) has not been monumental; but there is no measuring their indirect influence on the culture of this country. Matthew Arnold always contended that without an intellectual clearing house, the best man in the world becomes narrow-minded, provincial, and maladjusted. Noah Webster died in 1843; he stated right out that he had pushed philological investigation so far ahead of everyone else that all others would have to revise their works on the basis of his superior knowledge. The fact is, all his mistaken Connecticut notions had to be revised by M. L. A. men. Attendance at one meeting of the M. L. A., especially if he had read a paper, would have cured Webster completely of his erroneous attitude and beliefs. But omit Webster. In 1928 there were 30,000,000 students in our schools, colleges, and universities. Not a one of these could escape even if he wished to the influence of the M. L. A.

Apart from papers, and directly, the members of the M. L. A. have also founded eight philological journals that stand up well with the mother magazine; they have founded pedagogical journals

too numerous to record; they have founded the dialect society and brought its official organ into existence; they have founded teachers' organizations that are active enough; they have furnished the nation with no end of college executives, editors, publishers, translators, and general students of literature, free lance and academically attached; they have made available the photostatic reprinting process by which otherwise inaccessible manuscripts are laid in the lap of the student; they have done much to illuminate the study of the classics, their early rivals; they have published countless texts now used in all schools from the grades to graduate work; they have written serious books for the general reader; they have stood solidly behind all movements for clean diction and right pronunciation; they have sponsored such splendid editions as the Columbia *Milton* and the Hopkins *Spenser*; they have given many an exact scientist such style as he may have, good, bad, or personal and enabled him to read the works of his foreign colleagues; they have done more than any other group of scholars to create good will among nations; they have rendered manifold and invaluable service in times of war; they have sponsored great dictionaries; they gave Sir Sidney Lee the cue for the formation of the Modern Humanities Research Association; they have successfully aided and abetted New Humanism; directly and indirectly they have been our cultural leaders for half a century. Nor have they failed to engage in pure charity, giving as they have at times of their funds in support of some family whose deceased head had once been a member of the organization.

Naturally the M. L. A. has suffered its defeats, made its mistakes, and had its troubles. Twenty years ago, it consumed much energy, and embarrassed such princely scholars as Calvin Thomas, G. O. Curme, Brander Matthews, and George Hempl by its attempt to simplify English spelling, admittedly the worst in the world. On this escapade Andrew Carnegie (to whom spelling never was an easy task) spent \$283,000. The sole lesson learned from all this was that the thing cannot be done precipitately.

About the same time it attempted to standardize and simplify grammatical nomenclature. That was a failure. It is too early to pass judgment on the nation-wide study of the teaching of modern languages since the World War, a huge project subsidized by the

Carnegie Corporation, which published its findings in various volumes. The plan to bring out an M. L. A. "Who's Who" was merely an amusing idea on the part of someone who was happily dissuaded before any harm had been done. The plan to have a meeting in Europe was unfeasible from the beginning. Nor was the creation of a separate Central Division (founded primarily by W. H. Carruth: "Some call it evolution, others call it God"), no longer existing, of more than passing or regional service. Nor should the M. L. A. have abandoned the plan to pay for articles, after the fashion of impoverished Europe. It is a grotesque epoch in which to suggest that a professor may be overpaid; but the one who does no research work may give his institution not more than 500 clock hours of service a year (less than two months for a journalist). The one however who publishes should be remunerated. The lawyer is; why not the professor? But the M. L. A., partly because it dislikes journalistic publicity, has never been able to procure the needed funds from an uninformed public.

This has been one of the M. L. A.'s most serious errors. The organization needs such attention as the journalists would be only too happy to give it, if encouraged, and the journalists badly need the restraining influence that comes from worshipping accuracy. The apathy is reciprocal, and doubly injurious.

Moreover, it is one of the ironical pleasantries of American culture that the same professor who condemns the daily press today will start a student to disemboweling what was in the press a few years ago and, now that the contents have taken on the patina that accrues from the basement of the library, will confer on the student who works this material the degree of Ph.D. with all the rights and privileges appertaining thereunto.

This is richly ironical, because the professor condemns the daily on account of its alleged inaccuracies. Are his own students accurate? When a student takes an examination he becomes a reporter. If he receives any grade above 70, does not the professor regard him as passing accurate? Or, if the professor himself reviews a book he becomes a reporter. Are we not forced to infer, from these reviews, that in many cases the professor himself, the original author, was not much more than 70 percent, accurate in either fact or judgment?

The present writer found the one daily¹ with which he was associated a more fervid stickler for accuracy than any one of the five collegiate institutions in which he has taught. Naturally, it has been a different type of accuracy, one that Lafcadio Hearn disposed of long ago when he said, "Literature *must* wait, journalism *cannot*".

Finally, the M. L. A. has been more generous to foreign scholars than they have been to us. Submit an article written in English to a Continental magazine and, with some happy exceptions, it will be returned with the note that articles are not accepted unless written in the language that, in the given case, is native. The PMLA publishes without regard to language. In the issue of September 1933 four languages are represented. Moreover, professors in Continental universities are natives; we import without reserve. For a while, say till 1900, our liberality was obligatory; since then it has been more a matter of tradition than obligation.

The M. L. A.'s troubles have been at once spiritual and material. Experience has now taught us that scholarship will not of itself give judgment or change character. In 1896, Calvin Thomas, probably the most sensible man that ever taught German in the United States, said: "Admiration can co-exist with equipoise." All that Thomas meant was that if A dislikes B on personal grounds, A's judgment regarding a book B has written is not worth much. Thomas found it simply futile to look for sound sense in the harsh judgments of imperfect sympathy.

Lowell contended that the M. L. A. was making literature a study when it should be a pleasure. He would even rise as presiding officer and say, "Gentlemen, what is the next order of pleasure?" Though that has a slight teachers' college or normal school ring, there is an element of sense in it. Some of the papers published lack human interest. Commenting only six years ago on the dullness of the articles, and the fact that they therefore remained unread, A. H. Thorndike said: "Of course, any man has a right to be as dull as he pleases so long as he is talking to himself." Witness the current interest in the analyses of sounds. Similar matter was flailed at the very beginning by Ellis, Bell and others. A research devotee then became quite wrought up over the ques-

¹The New York Evening Post, 1919-1922.

tion as to whether "whole" and "hole" have the same sound in such a sentence as "The rabbit occupied the whole hole." Lowell rose and remarked: "Gentlemen, the trouble can be avoided by merely saying that the rabbit occupied the whole burrow."

And money? Uninterruptedly since 1883, the M. L. A. has perforce and under duress been

*Still amorous, fond, and billing,
Like Phillip and Mary on a shilling.*

Her irreplaceable secretary, Carleton Brown (New York University) has never known precisely how he would meet the M. L. A.'s official obligations from the meager funds at his disposal; nor has he himself, until recently,³ ever been able to escape from a greater load of unrewarded duties than any one man should be asked to carry. But the M. L. A. marches on, justly proud of its past and securely confident of its future. It renders its distinguished services to the nation without money and without price. If republics were only a bit more grateful! And generous citizens a bit better informed! For without the M. L. A., which unwisely tries to batten on the obscurity born of excessive modesty, real teaching, even in the grade schools, would be unthinkable.

³Dr. Carleton Brown is now very ably assisted by Dr. Percy Waldron Long who, since March 1932, has excellently edited PMLA.—*Editor*.

by K. L. Knickerbocker

BROWNING AND HIS CRITICS

THE abiding conflict between male and female of the species is closely paralleled by the no less abiding conflict between the creative writer and the critic. The analogy could be pursued much further. Let it suffice to observe that one who creates is male, one who judges is female. The latter has had a tendency to maintain at times a near equality with the former (*vide* Matthew Arnold). For the most part, however, she has betrayed her feminine attributes in two ways: she insists on reforming the male, and, often, she resorts to nagging in order to bring the reform about. Browning, a most chivalrous gentleman, was probably unaware of the female nature of criticism, else he would have exercised greater restraint in his epithets—one of which was “the venomous tribe”—respecting the sorority of critics.

Indeed, Browning was Chaucerian in the measure of disdain he expressed for critics: he cared not “three oat grains” for any of them. All writers should consider critics as their “natural enemies”. That Keats and Tennyson should tread softly all their days because of a gruff word or two was incomprehensible. As for himself he hoped “to be the weekly and monthly annoyance of these fellows to the world’s end”. Unquestionably he achieved this last ambition. One may hear a veritable gnashing of teeth on the part of the reviewers assigned to cover Browning’s steady output of difficult poems.

Was the poet, for his part, impervious to the buffetings of his critics? Was he insensible to their jeering? A diligent search of Browning’s poetry published between 1833 and 1876 will reveal the poet’s slight concern for the professional tasters of his verses. There are, of course, incidental rumblings of reproach in a dozen or so of his poems. The explosion came, however, with the publication in 1876 of the *Pacchiarotto* volume, a volume as rarely dwelled on by Browning’s friends as by his enemies. The former like to consider the collection as an aberration, a ‘sport’ in the

family of the poet's good-natured poems. The latter avoid its strident acidity, saving their faces, as it were.

There was at least one person to whom the attack Browning launched against his critics was no surprise. That person was E. Chapman of Chapman and Hall, Publishers. During the Fifties Chapman, as publisher for Browning, had been the recipient of many letters from the poet. A sheaf of these letters forms a part of the manuscripts preserved in the Pierpont Morgan Library. Through the courtesy of Miss Belle da Costa Greene I have been granted the privilege of conning these letters. They tell an interesting story, a story left unrevealed by the publication of any other group of Browning correspondence. They act as the antecedent action for the dramatic outbursts in *Pacchiarotto*.

It must be mentioned that two other persons seem to have realized at the time *Pacchiarotto* was published that the mood of the volume was an inevitable one. James Thomson, poet, pessimist, and—oddly enough—great admirer of Browning, observed that the poet's anger was justified but that perhaps the expression of this anger was postdated. If Browning were going to scourge his critics, he should have done so, say, during the Fifties when the money-changers were actually at work desecrating his temple. Nevertheless, Thomson, though he failed to recognize the timeliness of the *Pacchiarotto* assault, knew that the volume was not a product of eccentricity. The other person who knew this was the reviewer for the *Atlantic Monthly* (December, 1876). He thought *Pacchiarotto* showed that its author was "growing old" and crotchety as evidenced by "all this fuming at critics". He confesses, however, that "this volume will doubtless come to many readers of Browning almost as an autograph letter". One wonders how this critic knew so accurately what Browning's autograph letters were like.

II.

Up to the beginning of Browning's courtship of Elizabeth Barrett, the author of *Paracelsus* possessed his soul in patience under the assaults of those critics who deigned to notice him. Occasionally his wrath exploded. To Domett he wrote in 1843: "They take to criticising me a little more in the Reviews—and God send I be not too proud of their abuse! For there is no hiding the fact

that it is of the old proper drivelling virulence with which God's Elect have in all ages been regaled". The provocation for this outburst is explained by what Browning adds: "One poor bedevilling idiot, whose performance reached me last night only, told a friend of mine, the night before that, how *in reality* he admired beyond measure this and the other book of Mr. Browning, but that in the *review*, he thought it best to, etc. etc. This Abhorson boasted that he got £400 a year by his practices!" That criticism should thus thrive—that the parasite should come to outweigh the thing on which it fed—and particularly that it should prosper because of hypocrisy, were considerations enough to call forth Browning's final exclamation to end this anecdote: "But New Zealand it left for me!" For the most part, however, Browning made himself content with his lot, confident always that he was moving forward and that eventually he would win out through a combination of his increasing command over intelligible expression and his critics' consequent capitulation to his real worth.

Browning's marriage complicated his attitude toward the tribe of Abhorsons. (If the poet had but realized the feminine propensities of this tribe, he would have nominated them, not Abhorsons, but Mesdames Overdone.) Contrary to the persisting idyllic conceptions of the Brownings' early married life looms the fact that the poet-pair had some plain, home-spun difficulties over the question of money. Elizabeth Barrett, through the good offices of her affectionate uncle, was at the time of her marriage independent. Not so her husband. His income must proceed from royalties on his books. Moxon's record of sales of the *Bells and Pomegranates* series suggested rather forcibly to Browning that dependence on such an income was nothing short of foolish. On the other hand it was not to be imagined that he could lapse into an easy dependence on his wife's income. But what was a poet to do, a poet who wanted to live in Italy with his poetess wife?

At the first opportunity he tried to find employment. He made indirect application through his friend R. Monckton Milnes for a secretaryship to a proposed English Embassy to Pius IX. The resolute independence in this petitionary letter cloaks transparently a real eagerness to obtain that for which the letter was written. Qualifications and circumlocutions abound in the letter, part of which I quote. "I should like to have to remember that I

asked you, whose sympathy I am sure of, to mention in the proper quarter, should you see occasion, that I would be glad and proud to be the secretary of such an embassy, and to work like a horse in my vocation. You know I have studied Italian literature sedulously. Governments nowadays give part pensions [Tennyson had received a pension of £200 in 1845]: I believe one may dun them into it. Now I and my wife 'keep our pen out of lenders' books, and defy the foul fiend'. We are quite independent, through God's goodness, and trust to continue so; but, as I say, I should like to remember at a future day that I proposed . . . to deserve well of my generation by doing in this matter what many circumstances embolden me to think few others could do so well . . . It is hateful to ask, but I ask nothing; indeed, rather concede a very sincere promise to go on book making (as my wife shall) to the end of our natural life, and making the public a present of our hard work without a pretention to the Pension List. Will you think of this and me?" The idea is, of course, that the English Government could well afford to hire an efficient and useful secretary rather than have the applicant, who happens to be a poet, dun them for a place on the Pension List—an action which, however, the poet-petitioner promises in any case not to take. Unfortunately the embassy was not sent. Consequently Browning failed to obtain this sort of vocation. On the same day that he was composing this letter his wife was writing one in which she confesses, "I hate so these money-questions". And without doubt money-questions were intruding themselves into the lives of these two poets in a way that must have been even more galling to Browning than to his wife.

In England, on almost the same day, William Allingham was recording in his diary that Leigh Hunt had said of Browning: "He's a pleasant fellow, has few readers, and will be glad to find you admire him." Allingham has added two significant exclamation points after this entry, and one gathers that Browning had not gained a whole-hearted adherent. The reference to "few readers" indicates accurately the state of Browning's popularity.

This brings us to the second of the external circumstances that assuredly played a significant, if indefinable part, in determining how important—and consequently how worthy of thanks or blame—critics were likely to be in Browning's estimation. Visitors at

Casa Guidi always knew that Mrs. Browning was a poet; frequently, however, they were delighted to find that her husband also wrote verses. It is too much to say that a lover like Browning was or could be jealous of his wife's success as compared with his own lack of it. On the other hand, though he honestly believed her to be a truer and more inspired poet than he was, he was also firm in the belief that his immediate contacts with the world, denied for so long to her, gave him an eventual advantage. Yet the cold, statistical reckonings sent out by Chapman gave the whole palm to the poetess, the poet retaining hardly a frond. Who was responsible? Browning's answer to this question is contained in the unpublished letters to Chapman.

III.

The first post-marital volume was *Christmas Eve and Easter Day*, published in 1850. Adverse reviews appeared simultaneously in *The Spectator* and the *Athenaeum*, less than a week after the printing of this volume. More than a year later, his account with Chapman in hand, Browning confessed: "I am vexed at the ill luck of Christmas Eve and Easter Day . . . Was the price too high? Could anything be done by judicious advertising? . . . Could one put in illustrations even now? I might get you a few good ones". There is no evidence that anything adequate was done to retrieve the failure, and *Christmas Eve and Easter Day* quietly expired.

A year later (January 16, 1852) Browning wrote: "I condole with you about my own bad job. I'll be bound you haven't sold a copy of 'Christmas Eve' . . . things may mend however". This is the poet's characteristic valedictory to failure. Yet, deeply immersed as he was in a "first step toward popularity", producing "lyrics with more music and painting than before, so as to get people to hear and see", he could believe that "things may mend".

On November 10, 1855 *Men and Women* in two volumes appeared. Here was Browning's definite appeal for popularity. He had striven diligently to mend his obscure ways, even going so far as to call in the aid of W. J. Fox, his early admirer, to help him read proofs. At first all went well. By Tuesday, after publication on Saturday, the volumes had sold enough to cover the expenses

of publication. Elizabeth Barrett was elated over the "good news of the promise of success" for *Men and Women*. Then the gush of sales stopped without so much as a subsequent trickle. Who was responsible?

The reviews had begun to appear when Browning wrote to Chapman on December 17, 1855. He had been poring over these critiques in the reading room at Galignani's, a depository for the current periodicals of all nations. As he reads his wrath mounts, his anxiety perhaps along with it. Chapman at least shall know what he thinks of the stupidity of the critics, those writers, that is, whose work appears in the weekly literary journals. "The notices", he says, "will come, I suppose, next month; meanwhile don't take to heart the zoological utterances I have stopped my ears against at Galignani's of late. 'Whoo-oo—oo—oo' mouths the big monkey—'whee-ee-ee-ee' squeaks the little monkey, and such a dig with the end of my umbrella as I should give the brutes if I couldn't keep my temper, and consider how they miss their nuts and ginger-bread!" This is almost the mood of the *Pacchiarotto* volume. A little later in the same letter Browning mentions that Milsand's review will appear in *Revue des Deux Mondes* for January 1, 1856, and he asks Chapman to "judge whether he finds the writing unintelligible—he a Frenchman!"

During the following month the notices did come. They differed from the hastily written reviews in one respect: they were more ponderously stupid. "I have read", Browning wrote on January 17, 1856, "heaps of critiques at Galignani's, mostly stupid and spiteful; self-contradictory and contradictory of each other. What effect such 'rot' would have on me, in the case of the book being somebody else's, I know exactly but how it works with the reading public you must tell me, if I am ever to know. I suppose we are not at the end of them and the best comes last, it is to be hoped". The 'rot' unquestionably had its effect, and the fact that once more he had been spurned by critics and public was soon borne in on Browning. Inexorable conclusions were to be drawn from Chapman's sad report. *Men and Women* took up its abode with the dust-covered *Christmas Eve and Easter Day*. The poet's farewell this time is a bitter one. "As to my own poems", he says five months after the publication of *Men and*

Women (April 21, 1856), "—they must be left to Providence and that fine sense of discrimination which I never cease to meditate upon and admire in the public—they cry out for new things and when you furnish them with what they cried for, it's so new they grunt."

It occurs to him that even his friends have failed to stand by him or at least to be aggressive in his behalf. He registers his complaint in the same letter from which I have just quoted. "The half-dozen people who know and could impose their opinions on the whole style of grunTERS, say nothing to them (I don't wonder) and speak so low in my own ears that it's lost to all intents and purposes. Now is not Ruskin a layer down of the law in matters of art? [Ruskin's famous pamphlet on Pre-Raphaelitism had saved the group of young painters from further journalistic trouncings.] Then see what he said of a poem of mine [*The Bishop Orders his Tomb at St. Praxed's Church*], printed twelve years ago and now, in this fourth volume [Ruskin had quoted nearly the whole of this poem in *Modern Painters*, Vol. IV, ch. xx.]—but nobody will snip that round into a neat little paragraph and head it 'Ruskin and Browning' and stick it among the 'News of the Week', 'Topics of the Day' as the friendly method is! It's a shame, ye public!" The epistle ends with this observation: "I write this witty letter with a gum boil big as my thumb's top over my left eye-tooth, it's conducive to a blend treatment of the people's stupidities!"

The gum boil undoubtedly subsided before long, but a more serious grievance served to augment the poet's anger. Mrs. Browning's *Aurora Leigh* was published late in 1856. The *Athenaeum*, which six years before had proposed Mrs. Browning for the laureateship to succeed Wordsworth, gravely set forth this opinion of poetess's verse-novel: "In brief we regret to declare that Mrs. Browning's longest and most matured effort . . . is in its argument unnatural and in its form infelicitous". The reviewer for the *Spectator* wrote to the same effect and, among minor causes for complaint, maintained a question as to "the propriety or good taste of introducing the Clarissa Harlowe calamity under any amount of reserve, or for any emotional effect, in poem or novel". How could Browning know that these opinions were not to be char-

acteristic of later reviews of *Aurora Leigh*? He had seen his own chances for popularity crumble before such assaults when reinforced by weightier battering from the monthly and quarterly reviews. Consequently, this sort of treatment of his wife, combined with the resentment he already felt deeply in his own right, resulted in words written to Chapman that amount to a statement of a crisis in his feeling for critics. He mentions the "blackguardism of the 'Press'!" This blackguardism, he continues, is "like those night-men who are always emptying their carts at my door—and welcome when I remember that after all they don't touch our bread with their beastly hands, as they used to do. Don't you mind them and leave me to rub their noses in their own filth some fine day". That fine day was a May-day nearly a full twenty years later, and it is extraordinary how faithful, almost to the very words, Browning was to his promise. To test just how faithful he was one should read the last hundred lines of *Pacchiarotto and How He Worked in Distemper*.

IV.

It is interesting to speculate on why Browning, having arrived so early at the proper mood for castigating his critics, should have postponed his reprisal for so long a time. The explanations are, I think, not far to seek. For one thing, *Aurora Leigh* did succeed tremendously, in spite of the early critiques, and to the great elation of Browning. For another thing, through the will of John Kenyon, who died in December, 1856, the Brownings inherited £11,000. This unquestionably minimized the danger from the "beastly hands" of critics. Then, too, it was soon after the publication of *Aurora Leigh* that Mrs. Browning's health began to decline, and her husband's hands were full, at least part of the time, caring for her. Further, from 1857 to the time of his wife's death, Browning was interesting himself in painting and sculpture and gave comparatively little attention to poetry. The first crisis passed, therefore, and for the time being the "night-men" of criticism went unscathed.

What, then, aroused Browning and caused him eventually to fulfill his threat? The answer to this question calls for a more lengthy discussion than can be given here. Briefly, however, the

provocation was provided by the reception given his poems published during the early Seventies. Chief of the offending critics was little Alfred Austin, the homunculus so bitterly satirized in *Pacchiarotto*. Upon his all too deserving head was emptied the wrath that had for two decades boiled, simmered, almost cooled, simmered again, and finally boiled over.

At the end of his career Browning wrote to Furnivall that he had, at the latter's request, taken down "and piled up scores of dead and gone reviews as stale as the dust on them". With this very real, composite ghost of his past with the critics before him, he adds, "'read' them I could not pretend to attempt, so did the sight of their very outsides sadden me—the word is not too strong. So much misconception at best, ignorance at middling, and malice at worst, in those old slaps on my face in order apparently to keep some fellow's critical hands warm!" Perhaps Browning's relations with his critics paid part at least of "glad life's arrears", and, certainly, such relations broke in discordantly on what has been called the Jupiter Symphony of his existence.

by Julius Vexler

THE ESSENCE OF COMEDY

WHAT is the core of comic expression, particularly in its dramatic mood? In his *Praise of Folly* Erasmus held the comic a good, bluntly: "Nor shall I go about to prove it [folly is a good] by Fallacies, Sorites, Dilemmas, or other the like subtilities of Logicians, but after my blunt way, point out the thing as clearly as 'twere with my finger." The strenuous imitation of a tragic action and the controlled nature of epic narrative may really make tragedy and epic superior to comedy. The considered brilliance of a humane criticism may, moreover, raise that genre near the foremost forms of literature. If we look down upon comedy and its hero, it is partly because we have some insight into "an illusion of a higher reality", a better folly. We laugh at our foolish flaws and rise above them. "Life is a comedy to him who thinks, and a tragedy to him who feels", said Horace Walpole. The epigram is clever, the distinction superficial. True literary forms whatever mingle emotion and thought, and a guiding will within them. Laughter may hold both its sides.

In his *Poetics* Aristotle dealt largely with the components of tragedy—action or plot or fable, thought, character, embellishment, and others. He would stake his entire argument upon an action, if universal and illustrated by a particular series of sad events, as the source of tragedy; so too, the other literary forms, epic and comedy, are worthy or weak according to the plot they embody. And criticism, when realizing the seed of action as the ethical will, or as the illusion that men are responsible for their own happiness, may rank near great poetry. According to Irving Babbitt, "One may well come to agree with certain great Asiatics, in contrast at this point with the European intellectual, that the good life is not primarily something to be *known*, but something to be *willed*." For our purpose we shall seek an action mediating

¹Irving Babbitt, *On Being Creative*, pp. xxxv-vi. Houghton Mifflin Co., 1932. Italics his.

between the essence of comedy and the material of humor. *Hoc opus, hic labor est.*

Some might argue for thoughtful laughter, for the insight of wit, as comic spirit. Molière, for example, attacks comic flaws with a neo-classic common sense, though he tends toward rationalism. Falstaff sums up the case for wit: "I am not only witty in myself, but the cause that wit is in other men." Yet however soundly discriminating wit may become in Molière, or however general in a Falstaff, it lacks the immediacy of folly's action, the mediation between vital check and vital impulse. The praise of knowledge is in action, to adapt a saying of Cicero. Nevertheless, we may conclude that it would be a poor sort of universal, obtained in the action, if it did not guide and inspire other phases—especially thought.

There are those who, concerned rightly with the full reaches of personality, would set up character as "be-all and end-all" of the specific art forms, even of comedy. The English especially, dealing with humours, from Chaucer's many pilgrims to Shakespeare's more and greater store of men and women, think the empire of characters the aim of creation. Yet even if one made comic personages "more humanly humorous", one may still put characterization after action. The art of characterization is complex enough; as Aristotle observes in the *Poetics*, the depiction of a person includes, among other requirements, describing him as he ought to be and as he really is. Such a descriptive exposition of the good man proving himself in comic confusion depends on action.

The ruth of comedy is its catharsis, its riddance of excess and hardened whim. Our vast foolishness is not to be endured; disgust and sympathy are roused; they unite to make laughter and purgation. Though much time might be spent on many subjects, from jests to the scenic embellishment of comedy, catharsis may serve as a final topic.

I.

The action of comedy ought be complete, of a certain length, free, and involving a hurt that is not serious or mortal.

By "complete" is meant an action containing general standards of judgment, either implied or stated, become embodied in a suc-

cession of foolish events. The two distinct elements of a complete comic action, the idea of responsibility and the irresponsible eccentricity, are mingled implicitly, and, so to speak, indirectly. It may even be argued that the artist's technical duty is to imply his ideas, to clothe his philosophy, to show his distinction intuitively through the action.

How deeply such inherent judgment may pierce is glimpsed in Dante's use of the word, *The Divine Comedy*. With the illusion of a higher folly and by imagining men in their inner life, or after life, according to mediaeval Christian theology, Dante saw his contemporary Florentines as comic individuals. His love "builds the walls of hell". However, this poem remains an epic rather than a comedy, because of the heroic mental voyage of the author, trampling a troublous hell, and running the difficult gamut to heaven, and coming forth in song. In comparison, though with less truth, Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* has been called a "human comedy" because of the parti-coloured variety of personages.¹ Dante's judgment is religious; Chaucer's, naturalistic; there is still, as ever, room for humanistic creation. Parson and prioress, knight and merchant, and others, assemble here in Chaucer's pages as naturally as individuals can be brought together, as often as *vertu* is engendered from the pleasant side of nature. The wholesome naturalism and health of this assemblage do not yet make Dante's comic responsibility. We may see a distinction in their self-portraits: Dante as a humble pilgrim, yet discarding Virgil in the high reaches, and Chaucer as the playful rhymster, "elvish by his contenance", retreating whimsically into the crowd.

To round out a comic action, some works have mingled implication and statement of idea with the event. One interesting method is the "life-as-a-dream" concept, wherein a person asleep dreams of several untoward incidents and wakes to his daily life with relief. Grillparzer in *Das Leben, Ein Traum*, blends skilfully and distinguishes nightmare portion and waking reality and judgment. The illusion is pointed—perhaps for all the 112 different kinds of fools classified by one mediaeval writer. Calderon, from whom Grillparzer borrowed, in his *La Vida es Sueno*

¹G. L. Kittredge, *Chaucer and his Poetry*. Harvard University Press, 1915. p. 154.

(translated by Fitzgerald as *Such Stuff as Dreams are Made Of*) awakens the dream-ridden protagonist to a comic serenity:

Since Dreaming, Madness, Passion, are akin
In missing each that salutary rein
Of reason, and the guiding will of man.

The difficulty with this method is to keep the dream from becoming a nightmare; this usually requires awakening, though Shakespeare points out how the dream is partly essential:

... We are such stuff
As dreams are made on, and our little life
Is rounded with a sleep.

Better plots are probably made in full day (for dreams only reflect the day, whether seriously or fondly). From Menander's fragments one may secure inklings of a full plot, of congruous simplicity despite several incongruities in the comic fall. A usual story, for instance, we find in the *The Arbitrants*: a woman has been seduced and has had a child by a man who does not know the processes of nature and who does not give the babe a name. Here a hurt has been done that can be gaily removed; a wedding, a series of tricks and recognitions arouse the man to the desirability of the woman and to his sense of honor.

As has been mentioned, some comic authors write their central ideas of justice forthrightly in prologue, parabasis, or comments. So Jonson, in prologue and preface, from amid much erudition, occasionally catches the classical insight into purpose. In the *Volpone* dedication he describes the comic poet representatively: impartial men

... will easily conclude to themselves the impossibility of any man's being the good poet without first being a good man. He that is said to be able to inform young men to all good disciplines, inflame grown men to all great virtues, keep old men in their best and supreme state, or, as they decline to childhood, recover them to their first strength; that comes forth the interpreter and arbitrator of nature, a teacher of things divine no less than human, a master in manners.*

To be "a master in manners" is noble rendering of the poet's motto.

Aristophanes too would not run the risk of having his satiric

*Ben Jonson, *Complete Plays*. Everyman Edition. Vol. 1, p. 400.

plot misunderstood and so would usually insert a parabasis with his ethical views. Broad coarse flings give way to lyric hints. Thus he prefaces his play *Peace* with this paean:

Oh, much desired Peace! thou art the sole support of those who spend their lives tilling the earth. Under thy rule we had a thousand delicious enjoyments at our beck; thou wert the husbandman's wheaten cake and his safeguard.*

In Aristophanes' mind at best Zeus is king and is wrestling with "whirl".

Cervantes occasionally comments upon his hero. The universal element that makes Don Quixote source for infinite jest is his general superiority in judgment and action. It is pitiful that as knight-errant he is a fool. Note why he sets out:

These preparations being made, he found his designs ripe for action, and thought it now a crime to deny himself any longer to the injured world, that wanted such a deliverer; the more when he considered what grievances he was to redress, what wrongs and injuries to remove, what abuses to correct, and what duties to discharge.* [Need one a better start for a comedy on the present-day humanitarian?]

But at the end, however, Don Quixote despises his chivalry books and shrives himself of his early folly, thus rising above it. Each comedy, each tragedy, ought contain such saving grace. Pascal puts the matter simply, that if the accidents of nature should crush a man, man has the advantage of knowing, while nature knows nothing. So too, the comic serenity to foolish plights is the realization over them, the happy ability to laugh at them.

Ordinarily one understands by the term *completeness* only the technical necessity that a plot have beginning, middle, and end. These parts merely must follow one another in a possible manner; the opening must imply certain results, and in turn the middle must demand an end, a solution for the action. In certain actions a man cannot get away from what follows after, and this fact can make for a humorous event. Hence the law of cause and effect is the strongest tool of the intellect. When one attempts, for instance, to get too much pleasure, the excess breeds its opposite

*Aristophanes, *Peace*.

*Cervantes, *Don Quixote*, Motteux trans., pt. I, bk. I, ch. I.

excess, and in the confusion pain rushes in. Jonson often deals with particular pleasures and pains. Volpone attempts to swindle too much gold from more people than he can handle and they simply take by force what he has won by cleverness. Molière likewise, though with more skill, uses this method, often tending toward rationalizing: where a Volpone admits to the audience he is tricking other people, a Tartuffe never admits his folly, but justifies himself with arguments to the point of self-conviction.

But according to Goethe's observation, "Art is art only because it is not nature." And so besides nature's "approximate law of cause and effect", there is to seek the universal to enrich human significance. No matter how "fast" a generation may be, swift justice ought to overtake it. This may complete the comic action. Aristophanes kept trying to prove the existence of such a justice to the Athenians; in his comedies the various fools and rascals receive just treatment. We need but consider *The Knights*, in which he mocked Cleon, the politician:

Indeed, so great was the terror inspired by the great man that no artist was found bold enough to risk his powerful vengeance by caricaturing his features, and no actor dared to represent him on the stage. Aristophanes is said to have played the part himself, with his face, in the absence of a mask, smeared with wine-lees, roughly mimicking the purple and bloated visage of the demagogue.⁷

But in the modern romantic comedians like Shaw, we get on the contrary, undeserved results. Such a practical theory, of the natural and supernatural, deals with human purpose, with the hackneyed "happy ending", or better, with the happy being. It makes a whole balanced activity despite the upset caused by a comic flaw.

The best comic action, therefore, is the combination of the possible and the probable. And it is better to have an impossible probability than a possible improbability. A bit too much is a combination of the impossible and the improbable. It is troublesome to deal with what you have not in a way that is unlikely to be.

⁷Quoted by P. E. More, "Humility of Common Sense", in *Humanism and America*. New York, 1930. p. 59.

⁷Aristophanes, anon. trans. Liveright, New York. vol. I, p. 4.

A comedy must be of a certain length to be fit for presentation or reading. The work is to be seen as a unit, as a well-knit illusion. Also in order that gaiety be grasped, as much attention should be given to its depth as to its length. Naturalism at its best admits that half a loaf is better than none, but philosophy ought to say that "the half is better than the whole". Though the difference here is only in the point of view, philosophy may be granted its superiority. So too, in considering the length of a comedy, consideration should be given to the kind of incidents as well as to their number. The writer may then be applauded for what he has omitted as well as for what he has presented.

The grip upon attention in a comic novel depends on a high consistency of the many incidents. On the one hand *Tom Jones* is loosely held together only by the lifetime and the temperament and the doings of the main person, and by the brilliant technique and natural strength of the author, Fielding. But the sense of vital purpose is missing. On the other hand, *Don Quixote* is, of similar ways from fighting wind-mills to freeing galley slaves; a true comic person, he feels responsible for misleading in his own way. And so, the hold of comedy is independent on its demand for time, and laughter flows free upon these occasions.

II.

A free action, fit for art and laughter, works with pleasant aspects of native irresponsible eccentricities, towards responsibility and freedom,—which are but higher follies.

Since men are born with particular traits and humours, then their working towards pleasure to the usual confusion of pain, makes for humorous incidents. According to Hazlitt, "The genuine source of comic writing, 'Where it must live, or have no life at all,' is undoubtedly to be found in the distinguishing peculiarities of men and manners." To satisfy rough villager and sophisticated city dweller, to enable everyman to be in his humour, demands very difficult measurement; a humour must measure its peculiar pleasure against pain and mistake and confusion. For example, Molière's *l'Avare* saves money to the extent that he suspects his children—in fact, for accidentally revealing the hiding-place of

¹Hazlitt, *Lectures on English Comic Writers*. New York, 1845. p. 178.

his gold, the miser would even choke himself. To a certain extent that spectator was right who said the *Miser* taught him "how to save money", but it does not reveal what to do with money, a more difficult problem.* And Ben Jonson's *Alchemist* may seem to forget the motive of humour. Apparently the alchemist does not try to satisfy the pinching of necessity or the petting of pleasure; he seems to trick for its own sake. But the irony rings true. It is humorous that such a clever man cannot honestly earn his livelihood.

By practice and definition, humour is way of flowing, a way of acting, and not the flux itself. If humour secures pleasure it differentiates itself from chaos; if not it subsides therein and misleads to fatalistic theories. Here is Einstein's relative idea on humour:

I do not believe we can have any freedom at all in the philosophical sense, for we act not only under external compulsion but also by inner necessity. Schopenhauer's saying—"A man can surely do what he wills to do, but he cannot determine what he wills,"—impressed itself upon me in youth and has always consoled me when I have witnessed or suffered life's hardships. This conviction is a perpetual breeder of tolerance, for it does not allow us to take ourselves or others too seriously; it makes rather for a sense of humour.¹⁰

In the main however, no matter how troublous life may be, men will not give up their pleasures for pains, their happiness for misery. In short they will ask for an active, not a Stoic, sense of humour.

Of course, the difficulty with the theory of humours is the difficulty of measurement, the fact that few people can add pleasures and subtract pains. Between two evils some men might happen to choose both in order to get more out of life. The endeavor to escape responsibility completely, results in irresponsibility and determinism. Cabell, in *Beyond Life*, seeks a faithless fancy fleeting, and ends his creations destructively. One person describes the result well:

It is a world peopled in part by those who never have been:

*Rousseau mistakenly objected to Molière, saying his comedies conveyed vice and misanthropy, whereas these qualities are shown only in their painfulness.

¹⁰*Living Philosophies*. New York, 1931. Albert Einstein, contrib. pp. 1-2.

fantastic monsters, and women of unearthly loveliness and a host of antic creatures whose like is not to be encountered in the world of flesh. But in this world, too, man lies under an inescapable sentence of defeat; and in this world, too, all nobility, all happiness and all high endeavor stay unattainable through the whim of the creator of the world.¹¹

After such a failure to produce comedy, the common sense that governs mankind will seek a more moderate and human theory. The makers of comedy may well concentrate on the element of truth involved in the Hindu thought:

We wrestle in our present state With bonds ourselves we forged —and call it Fate.¹²

Of the various tricks employed to raise a laugh, none is more realistic than self-deceit. The comic personages usually slip into predicaments of their own making. Tartuffe slips into his own mistakes. When Tartuffe steps upon the stage after the first two acts skilfully spent in describing him, already *in medias res*, he embodies to the full a convinced and logical hypocrite. But Tartuffe derives his justification not from religion, but from Jesuit casuistry, discovered at that time by Pascal's *Provincial Letters*. Hence his flaw is not deep enough; he remains stunned and not even grateful for the real defeat given him. The play *Le Misanthrope*, which pretends to exhibit the comic error of an urbane man, was claimed to portray the *honnête homme*. Despite the wealth of talent and observation, the misanthrope's sardonic end, his quitting society, does not make genial comedy. Instead of quitting society, and planning to live honorably and alone in the country, he should have tried to live sadly with his fellow men in the city. Horace's money-lender had always planned to enjoy country solitude, but at the last moment he returned to his mortgages and to society. So might a misanthrope who had any sense.

Moreover, the action of comedy does, and rightly ought, involve a hurt that is neither mortal nor serious. Tears may lie deeper than laughter, though the upward contortions of the comic mask are almost as painful as the downward twists in the tragic.

¹¹J. B. Cabell, *Beyond Life*, intro. by Guy Holt. Modern Library, 1919. pp. xviii, xix. Mr. Holt becomes confused when he praises this "magnificent blasphemy".

¹²Quoted in full by P. E. More, *Platonism*, p. 161.

Both masks, however, imply similar calm and guiding lips of an actor behind. "Harlequin without his mask is known to present a very sober countenance, and was himself, the story goes, the melancholy patient whom the doctor advised to go and see Harlequin—a man full of cares and perplexities like the rest of us, whose Self must always be serious to him, under whatever mask or disguise or uniform he presents it to the public." Thus Thackeray wrote in an essay on Swift, and pointed out the relative positions of laughter and seriousness. And yet Thackeray does not suggest the comparative judgment telling us the time to weep and the time to laugh, the real difference between comedy and tragedy. Laughter, as an astringent tonic, ought to knit and heal some of the comic flaws and gaps in life. Folly at its birth, is supposed to have sat up and laughed at its mother, the rarity of such a birth hinting at the rarity of true folly. To jest at tragic death, on the other hand, is difficult, since the dying breath may well demand a deeper meed. The pride that results in tragedy lies deeper than the confusion revealed by comedy.

III.

As regards thought contained in comedy, most of our judgment on the subject will be found to center about the distinction between a play theory of art and the real theory of comedy. The extreme fondness many adults show for *Alice in Wonderland* is due, not to the fact they get much out of the book, but to the fact they get away from so much. "Man is entirely man only when he plays," is Schiller's statement.¹³ But man is a child when he only plays. There comes a time to put off childish things. The trouble with the play theory of art is that comedy soon becomes more foolish than the event it is mocking at. On the other hand Erasmus tried for something higher in his essay on the subject: "... though yet, unlesse an overweening opinion of myself have made me blind in my own cause, I have prais'd Folly, but not altogether foolishly." The description one has of Molière, as constantly glancing about and studying the actions and faces of individuals, is not the portrait of a roving dramatist. One may argue that there is a need for

¹³Quoted by Irving Babbitt, *On Being Creative*, p. 153.

a limited amount of play and escape in life, especially in an energetic and dynamic industrial age. (It is small wonder that we have worked out a "week-end" attitude toward life along with a "work-a-day" attitude, though we have not done much with either.) But as soon as one has put limits upon amusement, one has something different; one has, not a play theory, but a real theory of art.

For one may laugh at a mistaken or confused or thwarted purpose, but it is wasteful to laugh at nothing, at "a purpose that is not a purpose"—which is Kant's license to the play theory of literature. The subrational parody is a low level for such a powerful intellect as was Kant's. According to Lord Halifax, "Men often mistake themselves, but they never forget themselves." This should be the touchstone for the comic spirit. The play attempt to show men who forget themselves, or who make no mistakes (or all the mistakes), is untrue to the human nature which a Molière or an Aristophanes strove to copy and create.

Ethical, economic, political, literary and religious problems may be treated in comic literature provided they be embodied in human incidents. The action of comedy combines, as it were, "moral responsibility and intellectual impotence". Aristophanes is perhaps the most specific and general of the playwrights in his treatment of men and issues, in his satires upon the wars, the sophists, Cleon, Euripides. Probably his sallies upon Socrates were not quite fair; here Aristophanes seemed to have confused the philosopher's comic serenity with the fool's plight. For Socrates would have been first to smile at some of the vagaries of his arguments, at the same time remembering his high purpose. In fact, in the *Protagoras*, the argument almost laughs at the arguers:

For if the argument had a human voice, that voice would be heard laughing at us and saying: "Protagoras and Socrates you are strange beings; there are you, Socrates, who were saying that virtue cannot be taught, contradicting yourself now . . . Protagoras, on the other hand, who started by saying that it might be taught, is now eager to prove it to be anything rather than knowledge."⁴

Coleridge gave a good though indirect expression of the specta-

⁴Jowett translation.

tor's reception of drama as "the willing suspension of disbelief". The play theory of literature would demand a willing suspension of belief, a self-contradictory and meaningless requirement. For if "it is a wise fool that learns by his own experience", it is a wise beholder who can learn by the experience of another. And this requires some belief in the dramatic illusion of a comedy.

As for the thought occasionally expressed within a play, it is interesting to consider the break between moral responsibility and intellectual impotence that shows itself in great comedies, even partly, say, in Molière's *le Misanthrope*, *l'Avare*, and *Tartuffe*. Their logical arguments do not bring them happiness; they are almost pitiful in their self-delusion. All the rationalizing of misanthropist, miser and hypocrite seems unable to jump the gap and admit responsibility for their happiness. The uses of adversity may be sweet, but harsh are the uses of perversity. Once when Disraeli was campaigning for election he was asked what he would stand on. "On my head", was the reply. Perhaps, however, his wit was happier than the rationality of the usual Molière character. Then again, such a book as Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* shows a breaking-up of the mind, and not a knitting. That a story should move two such different groups as the old and the young in two so sharply different ways (i.e., as satire and as play) does not imply an approach to reason at its highest, the generalizing faculty.

In considering thought in comedy, it is useful to consider the philosophical bents of various periods of history. With considered brilliance, the criticism of Irving Babbitt dwelt upon the central problem of the one and the many. Though he stressed noble action in the poetic forms, with a just esteem for the Longinian definition of the sublime, he also appreciated the imagination and philosophy that govern society and art. The comprehension of the one and the many is the core of a sound and essential dualism. Mr. McEachran once applied this test in behalf of tragedy and saw the accomplishment of the dualistic ages, the weakness of the monistic¹³: the human elevation of Aeschylus and Sophocles; the limitations of the stoic Seneca; the accomplishment of Shakespeare in comparison with the modern naturalistic dramatists.

¹³F. McEachran, "Roots of Tragedy", in *Bookman*, April, 1930.

The same type of study and attack might be made for comedy; the worth of an Aristophanes or of a Molière, even when they lose their inspiration, might be set against the confusion of Restoration wit, of romantic irony. Molière himself was ready to attack any unreal definition of duality, such as the Cartesian distinction between mind and body: "Oui, mon corps est moi-même." "Mon âme et mon corps marchent de compagnie." This question may better be studied in connection with character and humor.

IV.

To create the comic character or the humorous personality, the spirit of comedy and the stuff of humour should lie close to one another at best and may work together. We have here a difficult artistic problem, fit for analysis and folly. Briefly, character conceived dramatically lies essentially between master will and master humour. Such characterization has worked itself out in tragic figures (the master humour here being known as master passion); and such character drawing may succeed even in the gayer regions of high pleasantry. The ancient European world, at its best probably in the Greek civilization, conceived man as embodying this division between a higher and a lower will,—this dualism within its bounds being subject to moderation and proportion, to the wide play and interplay of real action. In tragedy, a flaw, a wilful confusion, sufficient to ruin a man, could not prevent the realization of a vital restraint within him, above reason and emotion, above nature and its destruction. This made for his happiness against evil. Oedipus, essentially a moderate person, had committed an error once, enough to lay all low save his quest for character and happiness.

Tragic-comedy, however, seems unnecessarily confusing; and if I draw an analogy between the tragic hero and the comic personage, it is merely to stress their common duality. (Analogy like simile compares the likeness of otherwise dissimilar objects.) A man licking the tears from his wife's face, makes a good metaphor of the rather confused tragic-comedy. Tears may mingle with laughter, Don Quixote had "an aspect beaten sweet and stern", but mainly the basic difference between tragedy and comedy is rough writ by nature and independently worked out

in practice. However, Aristophanes in *The Clouds*, incompletely satirized Socrates as a sophist. He seems to have been something more. Well might one smile with the Socratic arguments that occasionally laughed at their author. If we accept the evidence of the *Symposium*, Socrates kept his head clearer than Aristophanes in festivity, and we may suppose that he did likewise in laughter.

Latin comedy was prone to rationalize characters into general types—the father, the careless youth, the rascally servant, the good woman whose virtue is hidden. So henceforth, that combination of specific humour and general comic idea making up personalities in Greek comedy on happy occasion, faced the danger of excessive rationalization. To a certain degree it was fortunate that the muse of comedy possessed several great minds, artists like Jonson and Molière, who avoided becoming logic-ridden. For purpose of effective presentation they unified the action, developing the humour its share and perhaps more. Amid the variety of leading motives possible in a cast—and even in a single individual as a Byron was to show—to center attention on a single characteristic, is no mean accomplishment. Horace helped point the way, when he stressed exact depiction of persons:

The youth . . .
Yielding like wax, th'impressive folly bears;
Rough to reproof, and slow to future cares;
Profuse and vain; with every passion warm'd,
And swift to leave what late his fancy charm'd; . . .
A thousand ills the aged world surround . . .
Fond of delay they trust in hope no more,
Listless, and fearful of th'approaching hour;
Morose, complaining . . .³⁹

From this it is but a step from the appreciation of such a play as Terence's *Self-Tormentor*.

Terence was called by Caesar, a "half Menander", and the phrase might be applied to any writer who deals mainly with humours. And if we accept the general high praise of Menander, the expression is still a compliment, even when employed for later playwrights. Jonson defined the humour as the particular peculiarity of an individual; it resembles the type though it is not quite so broad.

³⁹Trans. P. Francis.

... When some one peculiar quality
Doth so possess a man, that it doth draw
All his affects, his spirits, and his powers,
In their confluxions, all to run one way,
This may be truly said to be a humour.¹⁷

With this equipment Jonson made his rational parodies. He gave English playwrights a necessary unity. But despite an elaborate concentration of theater and psychology and despite the great service he rendered drama by stressing the master-humour, he based his theory of humour upon gains and losses in pleasure and not upon the happiness of the wise fool. Moreover, in contrast with Molière, he does not seem to have reached the types that are slightly broader than humour. Thus Jonson's Morose hates only the sounds and noises of human beings, while the misanthrope of Molière hates mankind:

... Je hais tous les hommes:
Les uns, parcequ'ils sont méchants et malaisants,
Et les autres, pour être aux méchants complaisants.¹⁸

There is also a difference between a Volpone who believes his fox-like tricks are superior to those of others, and Molière's miser who is ready to marry his son's lover. One tricks to satisfy his own hardened whim; the other typifies many a miserly man. The English playwright deals with the set of an idiosyncrasy; the Frenchman handles a wider characteristic.

Then too, Jonson's characters in general seem aware of cunning tricks and occupy themselves with their development, while Molière's persons appear to contain contradictions without realizing it. From the dancing-master who believes the world will be saved if everyone learns how to dance, to a Tartuffe who thinks that the world will be saved if everybody serves him, Molière has types more skilfully worked out. Tartuffe perhaps is the great creation of the French dramatist, apparently stronger than the miser and misanthrope and hypochondriac and others. He steps upon the stage a full-sketched and well-fed and consistent hypocrite. A man who says he has no religious tolerance, is merely guilty of an amusing malapropism; and if he tries to live up to it, he is uplifted beyond hope. However the man who claims a

¹⁷Ben Jonson, *Every Man out of his Humor*, Induction.

¹⁸Molière, *Le Misanthrope*.

virtue, as does Tartuffe, and proves the opposite, may yet learn. There is no trick more difficult to avoid than self-deceit; but most of all himself.

... Je sais l'art de lever les scruples.
Le ciel defend, de vrai, certains contentements;
Mais on trouve avec lui des accomodements.
Selon divers besoins, il est un science
D'étendre les liens de notre conscience,
Et de rectifier le mal de l'action
Avec la pureté de notre intention.¹⁹

Though Tartuffe is willing to call supernatural ideas down from cloudland to aid him, he forgets that when a cloud comes to earth it is a fog. He forgets the high restraint that gives idea and cloud their form, that laughs at human uses, that fights abuses.

It is Falstaff who possesses a truer insight; it is Shakespeare who is truly tinct with eternal light. We read the valiant knight's speech on honour:

... What is honour? A word. What is that word honour?
Air. A trim reckoning! Who hath it? He that died a Wednesday. Doth he feel it? No. Doth he hear it? No. ...
Honour is a mere scutcheon, and so ends my catechism.²⁰

There is a distinction between honour as a scutcheon as in Falstaff, and honour as a blot on the scutcheon in Tartuffe. And Don Quixote's self-sacrifice seems to approximate Falstaff's perspicuity. In fact, it is Don Quixote and Falstaff who prove the firmness of humour as the comic base with its ability to rise above itself. The strength and restraint within the master-humour, is shown strikingly when two such widely different persons embody the same method and contain the same trait, a mistaken courage. According to Cervantes, his knight contains every virtue, but his notion of courage is flawed:

Who would not have taken Don Quixote for a man of extraordinary wisdom, and as excellent morals, having heard him documentize his squire in this manner; only as we have often observed in this history, the least talk of knight errantry spoiled all, and made his understanding muddy; but in everything else his judgment was very clear, and his apprehension

¹⁹Molière, *Tartuffe*, IV, 5.

²⁰King Henry IV, V, 1.

very nice, so that every moment his actions used to discredit his judgment, and his judgment his actions?"²¹

On the other hand, according to Morgann, Falstaff is given every vice save cowardice, but even his bravery is errant. Where farce might present a man too clever to live, comedy has made Falstaff and Don Quixote too wise to die.

Besides the element of insight into honour and comedy, there are the pleasantries of humour. Don Quixote dares free the galley-slaves because they are uncomfortable. Falstaff asks the prince:

But I prithee, sweet wag, shall there be gallows standing when thou art king? . . . Do not thou, when thou art king, hang a thief.

Or again, Falstaff shows his humour:

I am accursed to rob in that thief's company . . .

A plague upon't when thieves cannot be true to one another.

But to give Falstaff every vice save cowardice is not the blessed economy of true comedy, but savors of groundling wit. Excesses do not enrich a character. It savors more of stunter's trick than of the true use of technique. But the variety of Shakespeare's humours and their naked strength of action, is not to be mistaken for the comic intuition, for example, "honor as a breath"—still less is it to be confused with groundling wit, with Falstaff's being "a coward on instinct", with the 'subrational parody.

To a large extent the immediate appeal of a literary form must be emotional, and yet to an equal extent there ought to be a rising above emotion. In short, together, a catharsis is made. What with the variety of emotions the modern and romantic world prides itself on, one ought distinguish between the higher laughter of folly and mere eccentricity. It is a pity that Falstaff is a coward. Had Molière's characters possessed truer insight and spirit, we might have agreed that it was a pity that Tartuffe was a hypocrite, that Alceste was a misanthrope. The dramatist should pity his character with its flaw as the doctor pities the man whose arm he must amputate,—impartially, objectively, glad to preserve the better living man. Character belongs to

²¹Cervantes, *Don Quixote*, Motteux trans. Part II, chap. 43.

philosophy and comedy. There is the distinction between the idea of the hospital and the hospital as seen by the patients, between Bethlehem and Bedlam.

According to an American maxim about statesmen, "You can fool some of the people some of the time; you can fool some of the people all the time, but you can't fool all the people all the time." But the real comic irony here is that we should infer that statesmen would try to fool others; if they did, they would fool themselves as well as us. We may imagine the comic situation of a politician able to "fix" everything except his happiness.

V.

I have attempted the distinction between comedy and humour in order to hint at a moderation between humourous material and comic essence. And in general, where the histories of literature have looked down upon the comic hero and looked up to the tragic protagonist, we may yet grant that comedy may attain its insight, its calm amid eccentricities, its catharsis. The comic playwright with his talent may lay claims to genius. The vital distinction between comic spirit and humour stuff makes for comic irony. Humours have a wide range of reactions from frivolity to grimness, from whimsy to grimace; comedy controls all these reactions with its laughter. Cervantes' canon does not spare the accomplishments of plays:

He who sees a play that is regular and answerable to the rules of poetry, is pleased with the comic part, informed by the serious, surprised at the variety of accidents, improved by the language, warned by the frauds, instructed by examples, incensed against vice, and enamoured with virtue; for a good play must cause all these emotions in the soul of him that sees it, though he were never so insensible and unpolished.²²

This may be a bit too ambitious, but on the whole it conveys the idea.

Specifically, it is the comic flaw, the gay mis-step, the slight pride, that gives rise to a great amount of contempt and disgust

²²Pt. II, Bk. I, Ch. 21.

at the treachery men use to cheat themselves of enjoyment in life. It is sympathy which follows when we recognize that this slip might happen to men in general, that only a true comedian recognizes his own fault amid his tricks of self-deceit. Truth to say, then the laughter itself does not seem to be an emotion, but rather a way to express emotions, and hence a method of rising above them. Laughter is independent on contempt and sympathy; this makes the catharsis of comedy.

by L. Robert Lind

SONNET

(FOR ELENA)

If in this mirror you should chance to see
A face not mine, and yet no other man's,
Count nothing strange this unaccustomed me
Nor wonder at my altered countenance.
But do believe no mime, no mountebank
Stares suddenly forth, convention's mask laid by;
Think this no wayward Punchinello-prank,
But a less noble, yet essential, I.

Only remember what a mortal thing
Is man, how piteous-proud his male pretence,
Who is no hero to his hireling,
Whose Adam-antics make small difference
For one his subtlety yields no more to learn,
Pricked to infinitesimal concern.

by W. S. Taylor

WHY NOT CENSURESHIP?

ALMOST persuaded, at first, by the arguments for censorship; wholly persuaded, later, that censorship is wrong; and still not ready to say that unlimited freedom of publication is right;—are not these the stages of many a forward-looking person's thought about censorship? And why the uncertain conclusion?

Possibly because either censorship or unlimited freedom, taken alone, is inadequate; although the two systems differ profoundly, both contain essential truth; and the system of intellectual freedom, to realize itself, requires what is good in censorship to create a third, more free and self-disciplined, system which we may call censureship.

I.

"Liberty is not a luxury. It is a basic necessity without which man declines. This is a biologic fact, not a philosophic concept."¹ Thus have Ernst and Lindey stated the truth of intellectual freedom. Liberty, however, is a source and guardian of rights; and for economy, if for no other reason, individuals have a right to be forewarned of the contents of books, lectures, exhibits, entertainments, which clamor for their attention, just as they are forewarned, by labels, of the contents of certain prepared foods and drugs.

Significantly enough, people often seek such warning, and not always from weakness. The child—or the youth or adult—who prays to be spared from stories and news which cause bad dreams, is perhaps weak; but he may know his weakness, and he may look forward to the time when he can consider these things maturely. The youth, on the other hand, or the adult, who knows that his capacity is limited, and who sometimes seeks another's judgment of a book or entertainment as compared with other books or en-

¹*Hold Your Tongue*, p. 341.

tertainments is, so long as he retains his independence, not weak but wise.

The individual's right to advice derives thus from his personal limitations; but it derives too from the inadequacies of our cultural system. For although Justice Holmes' "competition of the market" for ideas is altogether essential to the best production, selection, and consumption of ideas, it is true that *the present conditions of competition in that market are often very unfair to individual producers and to consumers*, and accordingly to the social order.

Under our present system, when a book is published, it may or may not be attractively gotten up, effectively advertised, and favorably endorsed; the reviews it receives may be many or few, comprehending or uncomprehending, and impartial or biased; and any given reader, accordingly, may or may not find the given publication available or attractive. If the reader seeks to choose intelligently by following the book reviews, he finds that not all the reviews are at hand, and that those which are at hand are often quite inadequate. If, finally, having read the book, the reader needs to know opposed views, those views may or may not come to his attention. Producers and consumers of lectures, plays, and other forms of culture are similarly handicapped: inadequacies of time, means, and communication, to say nothing of extant species of censorship, keep cultural producers and consumers alike from enjoying real freedom of thought and expression; the freedom which depends, as Russell says, upon "equality of opportunity among opinions".

Of course perfect "equality of opportunity among opinions" never can be realized: the world is too complex, socially, psychologically, and mechanically, to permit that equality. The degree of equality, however, the measure of intellectual freedom, can be significantly increased, first, as the opponents of censorship have argued, by persistently rooting out censorships; second, as all reasonings against censorship imply, by constantly educating the people to defend intellectual liberty; third, as I shall attempt to show, by wiser use of the existing means of communication; and fourth, as rests with technology, by improving the means of communication.

²*Free Thought and Propaganda*, p. 41.

II.

There have been a number of interesting efforts to improve intellectual freedom through the existing means of communication. Some of these efforts have consciously sought the advantages of censorship without its disadvantages, through a self-imposed censorship. Thus Equity, the actors' association, a few years ago proposed that a committee of actors, dramatists, and producing managers should choose jurors to approve, revise, or quietly prohibit plays of which complaint is made. The *New York Times* commented that this plan, if put into effect, should prevent harm to "the reputation of players who not willingly participate in a dirty play", and should protect good plays from "the competition of productions puffed up by court notoriety." For the moving picture industry, Will Hays has organized a "Department of Public Relations", in connection with which the International Federation of Catholic Alumni, the National Society of Daughters of the American Revolution, and the General Federation of Women's Clubs have developed their policies of approving and disapproving current films. "One of the most persistent and influential forces bearing on the quality of pictures," says Hapgood, "has been the voluntary association known as the National Board of Review, with which are affiliated many local councils".³

"A much more promising solution" than any type of negative censorship, as viewed by Graves, "lies in the commendation of that which is fine and the ignoring of that which is not".⁴ This is the policy of the Drama League, and seems to have brought excellent results. I submit, however, that merely recommending the good is not enough. We need to know not merely what is good, but also what is bad, and why the good and the bad are so judged. For without this knowledge the intelligent theatre-goer must wonder whether every play has been fairly considered, and must lack opportunity to develop his own powers of judgment. We need, for intellectual commodities, while admitting their uncertainties of value, some such guidance as the Consumers' Research offers for material commodities, namely, judgments of

³*Atlantic Monthly*, January, 1933.

⁴*Readings in Public Opinion*, p. 1105.

good, bad, and indifferent, with indication of the reasons for these judgments.

The nearest approach to such guidance in the intellectual field now is the *Book Review Digest*, which brings together representative reviews of recent American and English books. Apart from the previously mentioned uncertainties of reviews in general, this *Digest* must be very useful to those readers who find it available and who are content to wait, after the publication of any book, until its reviews can be brought together. The practical uncertainties of the reviews remain, nevertheless, sources of unfairness to producers and consumers of books, and in like manner to producers and consumers of art and drama.

A specific suggestion toward correcting that unfairness has been put forward by Ernst and Lindey. Thinking particularly of the effects of newspaper reviews upon the fortunes of new plays, they write: "Since the critic and the author now battle on unequal terms, . . . if a scheme could be devised whereby newspapers would permit some reputable and competent person, preferably an authority, to rebut in their columns the critic's condemnation of a play, not only would the public hear both sides of the discussion, but a great deal of the bitterness that sometimes leads to litigation could be drained off. And possibly the right to sue for defamation arising out of dramatic criticism could be done away with altogether". By this means, Ernst and Lindey believe, "the newspaper would . . . be dealing fairly with its readers and the persons connected with the censured show; it would also be getting critical comment free of charge; it would be rendering itself practically immune to suit." Furthermore, these authors suggest, the same general plan "could be carried over into literature and art".

This plan, it will be noted, makes opposed views readily available for readers' judgments and for the protection of authors, critics, and publishers, and assumes complete freedom of publication. Accordingly, as we shall see, it harmonizes well with the system referred to at the outset as "censureship".

III.

Censureship would demand *complete freedom of publication*;

^a*Hold Your Tongue*, pp. 128, 166, 167.

but, recognizing the rights of governments as much as of authors, critics, publishers, and consumers, for the sake of consumers, censureship would provide *opportunity for the government's opinion* of any intellectual or artistic production to reach the consumer *along with the production itself*.

Why the government's opinion? Because the government, as the central authority approved or tolerated by the people, very often has a fund of practical experience or a point of view which it wants to have considered along with intellectual or artistic productions, and which the free individual needs to consider; but which under present conditions of freedom often remains unknown to the individual, because his attention is already occupied, and because the government has no way to put its view equally before him. In most instances, of course, the government will not want to express itself; the great majority of publications, works of art, lectures, entertainments, must seem to it good, innocuous, or better left alone. In the instances, however, in which a given production seems to the government unusually harmful, or helpful, to the government or to the people or to both, the government under present conditions is tempted to resort to censorship; and if it withstands that temptation, the government or individuals or both must often suffer, as previously remarked, from the current conditions of competition between opinions. Censureship undertakes to reduce this temptation to censorship, and to improve the cultural system, by acknowledging the experience of the established authority as important though human, and by enabling that authority's opinions to reach, on somewhat equal terms, the very individuals who meet strongly opposed, or supporting, views.

And how provide such opportunity? By setting certain conditions, to protect intellectual freedom; and by allowing the government to do what it likes within those limiting conditions. The first condition is, of course, complete freedom from censorship, freedom from restriction of real or pretended intellectual or artistic production. The second condition is that every publisher, play producer, or other claimant for public attention, must submit a copy of his manuscript or program to the proper government official or board, if any is appointed, for censureship; and must refrain from publishing or producing that manuscript or program,

unless it be a radio news announcement or a newspaper or periodical published oftener than once a month, for a period determined by law,—say two weeks for a book, one week for a periodical which appears at intervals of a month or more, and so on according to the type of production,—to allow time for judgment.

As a third condition, the publisher or other producer must reserve a definite place in his publication or program, also (unless he will refund dissatisfied purchasers' money) on any circulars or entrance-way bill-boards that he uses, for the official statement of censureship of that production; and if he receives such a statement within the legal time-limit, or, in the case of radio news and short-interval periodicals and newspapers, before his next regular broadcasting or publication, he must include the statement *verbatim* in the place reserved, together with, as a fourth condition, the names and qualifications of the censors. (This condition, besides demanding responsibility, allows for minority reports, which could occupy a part of the space reserved.)

If within the legal time-limit no officials have been appointed, or if the producer receives no statement of censureship, he may broadcast or publish his material unhindered; and in any event, as follows from the first condition, he will be free to rebut every censureship, in the same issue or program, in subsequent publications, or in any manner he chooses. If however in his rebuttal he cites authorities or experts to offset the prestige of the censors, he must, as a corollary of the fourth condition mentioned, cite *their* names and true qualifications. In this way, as President Neilson has suggested, "the principle embodied in the pure-food law might also be invoked with regard to 'blurbs' and other advertising material intended to mislead the purchaser of books or theatre tickets".*

If, for example, a statement of censureship in a book on health is signed by the president of the American Medical Association, and the publisher's rebuttal is signed by the "president of the Society of Advanced Medicine", the publisher would have to add that the latter organization includes no members of the American Medical Association, and is not recognized as a professional body by that Association. He could add, however, his opinion of the

**Atlantic Monthly*, January, 1930.

"Society of Advanced Medicine", also of the American Medical Association, and, for that matter, of the whole censureship system, so long as he includes what the law would regard as necessary facts about his chosen authorities.

To save himself from possible legal action for not giving these "necessary facts", the producer might often ask first the censors' opinion of the statement which he proposes to make about his authorities. Indeed, whenever the censors and producers have time and interest, they might well exchange advance copies of their proposed censureship and rebuttal, to help each side to state its position adequately (assuming that the sides disagree). A reviewer of technical books reports that by thus submitting to the author of each book which he reviews a copy of the review proposed, without surrendering his independence the reviewer is assured that he is not doing the book an injustice, and that his review says what he means. The authors, he adds, usually have appreciated this opportunity to prevent error, always have respected the reviewer's judgment, and in a few instances have found with the reviewer a common intellectual interest fruitful for both.

As a final condition of this system, all statements of censureship, and all rebuttals, must be unrestricted news-material, non-copyright, for free quotation by any person or publication, particularly by newspapers and magazines. This provision should encourage the public to watch the press for censureship statements and rebuttals as much as for the reviews which now many readers, when the reviews seem impartial, follow with interest. Thus one family, who had learned to disregard the paid descriptions of moving pictures in the local newspaper, found that paper much more useful after it began to publish the "Motion Picture Guide of the Woman's Club—Reviews of Motion Pictures Coming to Town Next Week"; much more useful not because the reviews seemed infallible, but because they were non-commercial and were found serviceable.

Freedom of production; reasonable time-allowance for censureship; and convenient publication of statements of censureship, together with the names and qualifications of censors and rebutters;—within these limiting conditions, according to the plan, the government could determine the number and kind of censors,

their conditions of office, and even the sorts of production which they must censure.

If it be objected that this system would bring with it all the evils of censorship—poorly qualified censors, discouraged producers, a dispirited or antagonized public, and so on;—the answer must be that such objection overlooks the facts that, under this system, the censors' only power lies in the convincingness of their opinions; those opinions must compete openly with the works censured, with producers' rebuttals, and, further, with critics' comments; the prestige of the censorship, and of the censors, will rise or fall according to the public judgment of the statements published; the censors will tend, therefore, not to censor at all unless they can censor well; producers may be stimulated to counteract the censors' views on occasion, just as under uncoördinated intellectual freedom producers are stimulated to counteract one another's views; most readers, listeners, theatregoers, and the rest, are interested rather than bored by differences of opinion about what they choose as instruction or entertainment; and in any case, under this system, every individual would be free to disregard the censorship.

IV.

Let us imagine a few instances of the system at work. In a bookstore we see copies of *The Way to National Prosperity*, by Arthur Tinker Wisegood, Jr., "banker, economist, political scientist". According to its jacket, "This book reveals, for the first time, defects in our national economy which have held the country back a hundred years. Without fear or favor, the author shows that he knows the facts, and that he knows what the government can do to correct those facts, and what you can do to help. He presents the first practical plan for creating national prosperity that has been offered since the days of Thomas Jefferson and Alexander Hamilton. This is a book for every intelligent citizen to read, and to read now."

Interested, we look inside the front cover for a statement of censorship, and find the following: "Arthur Tinker Wisegood, Jr., author of *The Way to National Prosperity*, was from 1914 to

1916 assistant-cashier of the Smithtown, Massachusetts, Penny Savings Bank, of which his father was president, and since 1916 has been enrolled from time to time as a 'special student' in undergraduate courses at a series of colleges, also doing some independent reading and considerable writing. In this book Mr. Wisegood proposes to take advantage of the newly-discovered sources of copper in the United States to put the country's finances on a 'copper standard', thereby giving the country, he supposes, a unique advantage over all other countries in world commerce. His plan is thus merely another effort to create a new national prosperity by introducing a new basis for the currency, and his arguments are the same as those of the various historic campaigns for a 'silver standard'. In seeking to put the United States upon a unique monetary basis, and hoping thereby to enrich the nation, the author overlooks entirely the following economic considerations: . . ."—but we do not stop to read the considerations, and noting merely that the statement is signed by Walter G. Fatson, Professor of Economics in the Hale Graduate School of Finance, we pass on to the next offering.

On the next counter appears *The Mental Hygiene of Marriage*, by Bert D. Berry, M.D. On the jacket of this book is a figure of Justice, gigantic, holding balanced scales, on each pan of which stands an attractive young woman, one blonde, the other brunette. In the foreground, midway between the scale-pans, kneels a young man, blindfolded, drawing by lot one of two arrows held out to him by Cupid. Underneath this picture are the following words: "Why did you fall in love with that particular individual? Why didn't you fall in love with some one else? What type can you fall in love with, and why? Why are you, or are you not, prepared to stay in love? And how can you make your marriage happy?"

"These questions Dr. Berry has answered personally for hundreds of men and women who have consulted him about their love problems; and now he answers the same questions for you, and for your children. *The Mental Hygiene of Marriage* is readable, scientific, and practical. It is a book for the married and for the unmarried."

Mildly interested, we turn to the place for censureship, hardly expecting to find anything, but do find a statement by Bishop

Canning, whom we remember as the fundamentalist leader of the large religious domination to which, as it happens, the governor of our state belongs. The Bishop expresses himself as follows: "The fool hath said in his heart, 'There is no God.' The wise man knows, and all religion teaches, that human marriage is a Divine Institution. The wise man knows that men and women are moved to marry one another by a Power not ourselves, and that if they are not happy when they are married, the fault lies with their own sinful Wills and not with the so-called 'complexes' and what-not that the author of this book believes in. This man would have found complexes in Adam and Eve! He would deprive us of all Responsibility! By prating of 'psychological *mechanisms*' he would make us lower than the beasts! He talks of 'decreasing the divorce rate', and of 'increasing human happiness'. But why should he *care* about these things, if, as he thinks, divorce is something to be 'understood', and 'human happiness' is something that can be increased by 'mental hygiene understood as a sort of engineering'? What we need today is not more 'understanding', but more *religion*! Not more 'knowledge of self', but more knowledge of God! I verily believe that a special place is reserved in Hell for all who tamper with sacred things the way this man does. I would to God that books like this were suppressed by law, and that I had more space to show what abysmal folly it is. Let no one in his senses waste time on it!"

On the opposite page we find the publisher's rebuttal, in the form of a letter, which reads:

"30 Langdon Street
Cambridge, Mass.
August 3, 1933

"The Protagoras Press
1-A Fifth Avenue
New York City

Gentlemen:

"In response to your request dated July 31, 1933, I am glad to submit a rebuttal of the censureship of Dr. Berry's book, in the form of this letter to be published entire.—

"*The Mental Hygiene of Marriage*, by Dr. Bert D. Berry, is a good book, in spite of its tabloid-classical jacket. In Part I, the author shows how day-dreams, emotional experiences, and various associations of childhood and later years often influence the individual's choice of a marital partner, and how these

day-dreams and other impressions should be managed and supplemented by wise instruction to predispose the individual to fall in love with a congenial person. In Part II, Dr. Berry shows how the same predisposing factors affect personality adjustments in the married state; and he suggests practical techniques for analyzing those factors, for interpreting them reasonably, and for working out a desirable adjustment. The author's observations are not new; he uses such terms as 'complex' and 'repression' very loosely; and his psychological theory is not above reproach, as when he seems to set 'The Unconscious' off against 'The Conscious' in normal individuals. His clinical experience, however, is very rich; his general approach is sensible and practical; and he uses language which the layman can understand. The book should do much to encourage the application of intelligence to the psychological problems of marriage, and thereby should benefit many persons.

"If this rebuttal, in the form of this complete letter, is satisfactory, you may send me the usual fee of \$25. If however this rebuttal is not satisfactory, then unless you can suggest a different form to which I can subscribe, please return the letter, and I will make no charge, as I am glad to have seen the book, and can use the material of the letter in the *Psychiatric Review* instead.

"Very truly yours,

HENRY A. HEDDING, M.D."

Appended is this "Publisher's Note": "Dr. Henry A. Hedding, whose statement appears above, is president of the American Psychiatric Association, and has been president of the American Neurological Association, both of them leading professional organizations. He is also a member and committeeman of the American Medical Association. Dr. Hedding is a psychiatrist with a large practice. He is also Lecturer in Psychiatry at the New England Graduate School of Medicine, and is editor of the *Psychiatric Review*, a recognized professional journal."

We buy a copy of this book, and learn from the clerk that it is selling well.

On another counter lies an ornate volume, *Curiosities of Erotic Psychology*, by Howe Hoakham. The book purports to be "a fascinating collection of erotica by one of the greatest eroticists, containing an inexhaustible number of curious episodes, anecdotes, and tales. The author has exhaustively compiled his subject-matter from authentic sources ordinarily inaccessible to the layman. He employs no technical phrases of the medical writer nor the vague generalities of the uninformed popularizer. The person of emancipated taste will find this book unique, enjoyable, highly informative." According to the statement of censureship,

which is by the chairman of the American Hygiene Council's Committee for Research in Problems of Sex, "Hoakham's book is an effort merely to titillate, and fails altogether to inform or in any way to strengthen the reader. Even if it had artistic merit, which it has not, the ambiguous and erroneous statements, unscientific generalizations, naïve theory, omission of many important facts, and total lack of perspective, make the book utterly worthless for the person who is informed in this field, and worse than worthless for the person who is not informed. The reader who seeks emancipation from either puritanical prejudice, unreasonable sensualism, or morbid curiosity should read say items 1, 3, 7, and 18 on the American Hygiene Council's 'Reading List No. 14', copies of which are available in most public libraries."

We do not pause to read the publisher's evidently ranting rebuttal, but turn from the *Curiosities* to a new edition of *The Spring of Futility*, by Isolde Pennyman. This story, as we remember from the days before censureship, disturbed many normal persons, especially single women, by its revelation of "one of the great mistakes of Nature", that mistake whereby, according to the author, "thousands of fine personalities have been set apart, from the day of their birth, from the so-called normals." The book also seemed likely to encourage homosexual persons to continue in their course and to persuade others to join them. In spite, therefore, of the "authoritative endorsement" which accompanied the book, we read it with grave doubts of its usefulness to society at large. We felt, too, that the author was somehow mistaken in her thesis, though just how we were unable to say. We are much interested, accordingly, to read the statement of censureship, which is signed by a reputable psychotherapist.

"The author of *The Spring of Futility*," he says, "sets forth well the life of the invert under present social conditions. As do most champions of oppressed groups, this author finds her subjects to be very superior persons, and argues that it is the social order, and not the persons who conflict with it, that ought to be changed. It is true that there are superior homosexual individuals, just as there are superior normal individuals; but there is no evidence that homosexuals as a group are more highly endowed than are any group of persons that might be subjected to similar

cultural influences, although homosexuals may well be driven by consciousness of their defect to develop their intellectual and artistic abilities unusually. It is true too that the existing order has been thoroughly uncomprehending and brutal toward this group, with the result that individuals have been driven to various subterfuges and rationalizations. Miss Pennyman's book is therefore useful in so far as it engenders sympathy for homosexuals, but is pernicious in that it seems to justify the condition and fails to indicate the causes of homosexuality, the means for its control, and why it should be controlled. The author shows no real understanding of the concept 'normal'; she expresses only the most popular notions of the causes of homosexuality; and she apparently misses entirely the significance of the patent psychogenic factors in the life of her own heroine. The specially interested reader had better consult Dr. Bert D. Berry's monograph, *The Analytic Treatment of Perversion*, which is obtainable from the National Medical Publishers. For most readers, the mechanisms operative are made sufficiently clear in the same author's recent *Mental Hygiene of Marriage*. The ethical problem is considered in Professor Everett M. Williams' article, 'Normality and Ethics', in *The North American Journal of Ethics* for March, 1933."

As we move toward the door, *In Defense of Anarchy*, by Patience Waring, interests us slightly, and we pause to see how it is censured. The statement this time is by a judge of the Superior Court. In his opinion, "the book tries to be clever in its effort to make law-breaking attractive. The author represents all law-makers as imbeciles if not malefactors, all laws as evil, and law-abiding as imbecility. Most economic and social evils she ascribes to laws, law-making, and law-abiding. She apparently believes that to break the laws and destroy our legislators, judges, and executives together with their institutions will of itself usher in a perfect social order. It will be noted however that whereas Miss Waring would eschew all government, she admits that her projected Society 'would naturally have Organization'. The experience of this and other nations is that organization is not a quality naturally had but one painfully acquired and to be carefully conserved. No intelligent lawyer or political scientist would maintain that our laws or our methods of making and much less

enforcing laws are perfect. Every intelligent person must realize, however, that under modern conditions particularly change of the social order can only come about by legal means, that is to say by free discussion and voting, without vast unfairness to innocent persons. It is the part of every good citizen to seek constantly and legally to defend and to improve the law."

At the doorway we meet the manager of the store, and comment upon the censureships we have seen. "You seem to have found about all there are in the store," he says. "Incidentally, I think the system is working pretty well. In the old days, I couldn't stock any of those *risqué* books because people would think we were cheap. Now I have to keep a few so people won't think we are prejudiced. And it used to be that those books were all sold by mail, to 'selected mailing lists', at fancy prices. The circulars would come in plain envelopes, and you were told literary titles, like 'Hume's History of England', to order by. Now, the law about putting the censureship statements in book circulars has spoiled that way of selling the books, so the prices have been cut fifty to seventy-five per cent, and the books are offered through the stores. I don't know how the sales were before, but they are mighty few now, and I have noticed that many a person, even a young person, who looks at one of those books here leaves it and buys something else."

V.

After these imaginary examples of censureship applied to books, we may consider briefly its usefulness for newspapers and magazines. For partisan and venal publications particularly, it would seem that censureship should put the reader on his guard against publishers' bias; and for all newspapers and magazines, censureship, by allowing unlimited editorial rebuttal, should definitely enhance the news-value of the publications themselves, both by raising their quality and by increasing their interest. For local newspapers, student publications, and workers' journals, special censureship could well come from their city governments, school authorities, and industrial managements, respectively. By this means a college paper, for example, if enjoying perfect journalistic freedom except for publishing official statements in a reserved

column, could never complain of "apron-string repression", would be disciplined solely by the editors' judgment of the official logic, and should enjoy, accordingly, the respect of readers and of officials alike.

An apparently worth-while extension of the censureship idea would be for newspapers voluntarily to print, in parallel columns, both sides of political and other controversies, somewhat after the fashion of *The Forum*; reserving the editor's point of view for the editorial page. Such a policy should help the public to discriminate between newspapers and propaganda sheets; between news and editorials; and, to some extent, between sound and unsound editorials.

In dictators' countries, where press and public are slaves censureship, naturally, could not apply, unless perchance a world organization of nations could enforce in those countries the publication of censureship statements supplied by the League of Nations. Indeed, required publication of statements from the League of Nations, without restraining any rebuttals, might be a splendid insurance, for all nations, against dictatorships, and against wars.

VI.

Of course, no system will work perfectly. We can not expect to make all productions good, and all people wise. Under the continue, by individuals, classes, and sects, for all persons who re-though more free to judge than under censorship or under unorganized freedom, yet would remain human. Under censureship, too, as under any free system, private censorships would continue by individuals, classes, and sects, for all persons who remain morally subject to those individuals or groups. Many citizens, under censureship, might miss its direct benefits, by obstinately disregarding it, or by abjectly following it; yet even these citizens would be protected from uncriticized censors and from the morbid social effects of censorship, and at least would have opportunity to consider opposed views.

Probably most citizens would rather believe than doubt, other things being equal, and hence would prefer simplicity of doctrine to the rigors of censureship. In modern life, however, other things

are usually not equal. People are compelled to think for themselves; many of them find such thinking satisfying; and a very considerable number learn to appreciate and to defend fair conditions for thinking, if only for choosing leaders to use those conditions for the public good.

"If there is to be toleration in the world," says Russell, "one of the things taught in schools must be the habit of weighing evidence".¹ If there is to be good in the world, we may add, the same statement holds. Obviously the habit of weighing evidence would be furthered by fair opportunity to weigh it. That opportunity censureship would try to increase; thereby carrying out Swinburne's view that "what is fit to live is safe to live, and whatever is not fit to live is sure to die."

¹*Free Thought and Propaganda*, p. 49.

by Harry Ransom

SONG OF HRUT

Up! There's the light of dawn in the sky;
Loud the wind in the north rises high;
Up! For the heart will be seeking today
Roads to the rim of the sea where it may
Learn if the blue sky of hope turns to gray
At the edge of the world, as the fishermen say.

Ho! stout of heart and steady of hand,
Sing a song of the fjord and the faraway land.
Today is the day for my boat and me
To search for the paths where the fish swims free,
Fearless of fishermen. Grant I may be
Strong for the sailing, God of the Sea!

—Adapted from the Saga of Brunt Njal, Son of Thorgeir.

by Merle Curti

OUR SCHOOLS AND THE GOOD SOCIETY

IN his hysterical and somewhat ludicrous attack on the brain trust for its revolutionary plottings Superintendent Wirt of the Gary schools was scarcely representative of his fellow educators. In these lean and troubled years, when the breakdown of our economic system has been so apparent, probably no group has been any more active and bold in trying to diagnose our fundamental ailments and to lead us to a more decent and beneficent social order than have the leaders of our schools. At least a handful of critical and realistic educators have tried to find concrete means by which they might help the American people enter at last into that "good society", about which our finest spirits have dreamed and toward which as a people we have aspired. If we are to evaluate our age-long faith in education as the road to utopia, it is high time to recognize and to attack the barriers that stand in the way of our educational architects and engineers.

Some have maintained that educators have been hindered in their desire to help us face and solve our problems by reason of the lack on their part of a social philosophy. Many voices within and without educational circles have been raised in criticism of the emphasis that school people have put on plant, administration, tests, measurements and teaching technique. A careful study of the social ideas of American educational leaders, however, shows very clearly that at least the most representative and influential among them have always had a social philosophy. This social philosophy has been partly conditioned by their own temperaments, but it has largely grown out of the stuff of American life; it has been chiefly inspired by Christian ethics, humanitarianism, the frontier, industrial capitalism, and science. It is true that the social philosophy of educational leaders has sometimes been confused and implicit rather than explicit. But it has not been lacking. If educators, then, have had a set of social ideas, it must be that it is the character of those ideas, rather than the lack of any

social philosophy at all, that has constituted a barrier to their social leadership.

In general, the social philosophy of American educational leaders falls into two categories. One may be called, roughly, the liberal, humanitarian and democratic social philosophy that has thought of the schools as important agencies in realizing what James Truslow Adams has called "the dream of American life"—or what may be thought of as "the good society under a beneficent capitalism." We may call the other a conservative social philosophy that has chiefly regarded the schools, in their social function, as agencies to preserve the existing pattern of economic and social arrangements, to prevent social revolution and the victory of any type of collectivistic radicalism.

I.

A survey of the social ideas of these conservative educators, who have far exceeded in number their liberal colleagues, shows very clearly that when they have thought of the schools as social agencies they have thought of them as conservators of the *status quo*. They have contended, in seeking for public taxes and endowments from the well-to-do class, that popular education was the best form of social insurance against radicalism and revolution. Colonial educators urged that the "barbarous, rude and stubborn class of servants" should be given instruction in the 3 R's and the precepts of Christianity in order that restlessness and discontent might be avoided. "To prevent the sowing of the seeds of Faction and Dissention" teachers had to be approved or licensed by the proper authorities.

The example of the French Revolution and the Napoleonic episode in Europe, together with the conservative Federalist-Whig reaction to our own revolutionary principles of 1776, made many educators in the thirties and forties almost hysterical in their solemn warnings that unless the public schools were abundantly supported the masses would jeopardize property rights, seize the government, and overthrow the whole existing order of things. The anti-rent war in New York, the Dorr rebellion in Rhode Island, the Nat Turner insurrection in Virginia, and the prevalence of violence on the frontier and in the cities gave point to their

warnings; while the bitterness of the more radical Jackson democrats and loco-focos toward the sanctity of property rights caused corporate wealth to put on its girdle for a fight. One educator lugubriously predicted that unless the burning tide of violence and anarchy were put down by education, the country would be reduced to "one vast moral desert, tenanted only by savage beast and poisonous serpents"—this was typical and could be duplicated any number of times. Caleb Mills, founder of Indiana's public schools asked whether a manufacturer could invest his capital with equal security among an ignorant and vicious people that he would in an intelligent and virtuous community. If attacks on property were to be put down, if lewd fellows of the baser sort were to be checked in their efforts to array the poor against the rich, then, argued another educator, the masses must be schooled to refute the dangerous and foolish notion that there should be an equality of condition. The papers of Henry Barnard, as well as his published lectures, show that he consciously appealed to men of wealth and position to support public education as the best insurance against social revolution: he pictured the working class as a slumbering, mighty power, with a physical strength which was liable to be called out at any time to wreak vengeance on people of substance and station.

After the Civil War hardly a meeting of the National Education Association was held in which some prominent educator did not denounce social radicalism. The populists and Bryanites were scathingly and bitterly attacked by Nicholas Murray Butler; strikes and collective bargaining were almost universally condemned; and socialism was a bugbear that was attacked with vehemence and invective. William T. Harris, who so profoundly influenced our education in the last third of the nineteenth century, declared before the N.E.A. in 1894, a year of strikes, that in the public school children were trained in the habits of regularity, silence and industry which would "preserve and save our civil order." In the public school, he continued, the child learned "first of all to respect the rights of organized industry . . . The school pupil simply gets used to established order and expects it and obeys it as a habit. He will maintain it as a sort of instinct in after life. Ninety-nine out of a hundred people in every civilized nation are automata, careful to walk in the prescribed paths,

careful to follow prescribed custom." This, he added, "is the result of substantial education.") In recommending university extension to Americans for similar purposes he declared that since demagogism increased in proportion to the neglect of the lower stratum of society by the highest, an enlightened selfishness dictated the support of adult education to prevent revolution.

Harris also popularized the idea of rugged individualism, and clothed it with the spiritual idealism of Hegel's philosophy, of which he was the leading American exponent. In and out of season he urged that the unfortunate poor should be helped to help themselves—this alone was the road that led to the surest amelioration of the evils of mendicancy and poverty. "Adopt all the cunning devices that social science has invented, and you cannot be sure that direct or indirect help of the poor does not undermine their selfrespect and weaken their independence." In almost countless papers and speeches Harris urged teachers to teach their children to respect and reverence established authority and institutions. They may not all have grasped the logic of his Hegelianism, declaring as it did that existing institutions, being an embodiment of the objective reason in the process of its unfolding, were right because they existed at the moment. But they could not have mistaken the assurance, the eloquence and the beautiful idealism with which he explicitly tried to refute, for their benefit, the "subversive doctrines" of Henry George, Edward Bellamy and Karl Marx.

Other leading educators took equally unequivocal positions and expressed their conservative social ideas just as engagingly. Indeed, G. Stanley Hall, with his attractive and disarming personality, took the popular idea of evolution and worked out a social philosophy that seemed to be the voice of authoritative science itself. Hall taught that evolution gave us a new basis for our peculiar type of government and democracy: the fundamental assumption of evolution was that the folk-soul could be trusted, that evils would, in the due course of time, be ironed out. "I am an optimist root and core," Hall declared, because "an evolutionist must hold that the best and not the worst will survive." Believing as he did that our social and industrial order was based on the inherited instincts of acquisitiveness, pugnacity, rivalry and self-expression, Hall buttressed hope and confirmed faith for

those who preferred to listen to the voice of "science" rather than to that of Harris and absolute idealism.

In denouncing reform and revolution this psychologist and educator declared that "in the whole biological field regeneration is never preceded by destruction. The scores of alluring programs of reformers are at best only palliatives, and their helpfulness at best is only transitory. Our own personal lives must rather be revised, for here alone can be laid the foundations of the new kingdom of magnanimity." He urged the importance of developing morale in the workers as the best safeguard against the communist menace, and tried to persuade industrialists that they would suffer from an uprising of their employees if they tried to thwart their instinctive love of property by keeping their wages at a bare minimum. And although in general Hall did not ascribe great positive powers to education in the social field, he did teach that the proper type of education, an education giving full rein to the racial drives, would prevent later antisocial behavior. He taught, furthermore, that "democracy must educate the masses of the world if subversive doctrines, such as Bolshevism, are not to triumph."

Most scientists will, of course, hasten to point out that science today has repudiated many of the facile generalizations that G. Stanley Hall made in the name of science, and that, after all, he was a theorizer and synthesizer rather than an experimentalist. But when we turn to the social ideas of another scientist who has employed the experimental technique, to let us say, E. L. Thorndike, it is clear that his social ideas closely resemble Hall's. One hesitates to criticize Thorndike, who has borne the brunt of so many attacks, and who has, after all, contributed so much to psychology and to education which even radicals would not want to efface. Yet it must be pointed out that, speaking as an experimental scientist, he has given support to social ideas that rationalize and seem to make inevitable and right the existing pattern of economic and social arrangements.

It is not necessary to repeat the indictments made by progressive educators of Thorndike's work and its general implications. The charge has been made that his educational psychology is antidemocratic in effect. We have heard again and again of the aristocratic implications of his teachings in regard to

the mechanical adjustment of the individual to a more or less pre-determined set of activities, to a relatively static environment. In permitting the teacher or expert more or less to fix the stage in the learning process, to decide on the particular 'bonds' or connections to be established, the learner is, we have been told, virtually excluded from sharing in the process. In speaking out against the equality of educational opportunity as it has been generally understood; in declaring that the mass cannot and should not do its own thinking on social problems, and on other matters that should be left to the expert, Thorndike has seemed to repudiate the American doctrines of freedom of choice, equality of opportunity, and democracy itself.

A whole school of critics has deprecated the aristocratic implications of Thorndike's teachings on individual differences. As a hereditarian, he has found experimental evidence, satisfactory to himself at least, for holding that what we think of as privileged and unprivileged environments have almost nothing to do with the achievements of individuals. He has even declared that if the thousand babies born in a given week in New York were given equal opportunities they would still differ in much the same way and to much the same extent as they will in fact differ. Whether the child grew up on Park Avenue or in the squalor of the East Side slums, he would find his level. Genius would out. The social implications of such hereditarian teachings are, of course, *laissez faire*, rugged individualism, competition, and the survival of the fittest.

On many occasions Thorndike has definitely committed himself in favor of our existing economic system and given psychological and "scientific" justification for his words and ideas. He was a pioneer in showing business men how to multiply their profits by exploiting human foibles through advertising. He has assailed as a foolish superstition the idea that there is no correlation between business success, high intelligence and morality; he has found all highly correlated, and denounced those who have maintained that business success is due to the system itself and to the laws of chance operating within the system.

In repudiating the idea that labor creates values, Thorndike has gone so far as to declare, in an address delivered two years ago to a great body of scientists, that capital is largely an expression

of personality. He has disposed of sabotage, strikes and labor boycotts by declaring them due to the mischievous labor agitator. Many manual workers, he has told us, were adequately paid by their love of their menial work, be it bed-making, dish-washing or ditch-digging; welfare schemes for labor and social legislation confirmed the erroneous view that labor was a necessary and evil curse to be endured only because it was better than starvation. He has disposed of communism by declaring it to be an example of the half-educated man's belief in magic: to Thorndike, in spite of the example of Soviet Russia, it violates human nature. He has gone so far as to say (curiously enough on the very eve of the revelation of the Harding scandals) that the masses had been ruled intelligently and altruistically! Thus not only in the general character of his psychological theory and his educational teachings has Thorndike confirmed the existing economic mores; he has, in the name of science, pontifically and specifically condemned all that conflicted with our existing economic institutions, and justified them on grounds that appealed to all who paid lip-service to the tenets and methods of science.

II.

A survey of the social philosophy of educational leaders that may be called liberal or radical indicates that in general their social ideas have been more explicitly expressed than have those of conservatives. The reason for this is plain: they have been protestants, and their attacks and criticisms must inevitably have been more or less explicit. The conservatives, on the other hand, being governed by the dominant climate of opinion, have frequently been only vaguely aware of social problems, and have consequently taken for granted the rightness of things as they are.

Most of the liberal, humanitarian educators have conceived of education as a kind of statesmanship, as a means of improving society, of realizing the implications of our democratic ideal. If progressive educators today think that they are pioneers in insisting that they should assume responsibilities for guiding and directing matters so that we may realize "the good society" it is only because they are not aware of the historical precedents for such a position.

Jefferson elaborated an educational scheme providing for universal elementary education and for the selection of talented boys from the masses for further training for social leadership. Dewey's conception of education as a social function was anticipated by Horace Mann who declared that the true interests of the schoolroom are identical with the great interests of society. He even went so far as to declare that the educator must be a statesman, that he must plan for society, "study out the eternal principles which conduce to the strength, wisdom and righteousness of a community; to search for them as one would strive for his life, and then to form public institutions in accordance with them."¹ Such was likewise the position of that great pioneer of progressive education, Colonel Francis W. Parker. At no time, not even in the first decades of the present century, when educators were so predominantly concerned with tests, measurements, plant and administration, was this conception of education entirely repudiated.

The liberal, humanitarian educators have hoped that social classes might be ultimately eliminated. In the days of Barnard and Mann they believed that the mere establishment of public schools and the virtual abolition of private schools, would effect that end by bringing together children from every social group. Later on they believed that social classes could be eliminated through a new type of education, in which the coöperative, rather than the competitive, the active, rather than the passive, dominated the school room; Parker and Dewey represent this refinement of the theory. The educators in the democratic, humanitarian tradition have also recognized and disparaged the class struggle. Even Dewey, who has most militantly and explicitly championed the interests of the underprivileged, has repudiated the value of class struggle. They have hoped and believed that education, if more abundantly provided, if modified and reformed in spirit and method, might serve as a realistic, dynamic and effective substitute for class struggles.

Most of the educators adhering to the liberal, humanitarian social philosophy have not hesitated bitterly to criticize the dominance of wealth-seeking in our civilization; they have also spoken out against the most extreme and degrading types of poverty. Barnard believed that public education would abolish poverty,

and Mann shared his conviction. These men, and their spiritual descendants, pointed out and deprecated the existence of unemployment, slums, recurring economic crises and depressions. They have appreciated the desirability of at least some measure of economic security. Above all, they have insisted on the importance of cultural opportunities and growth for all the people. Mann supposed that education could bring about such a utopia within two or three generations.

Yet Mann realized that there were tremendous obstacles to overcome. When southerners in Congress insisted that the slave trade was justified because it civilized Africans by exposing them to our superior American civilization, Mann, then a member of the House of Representatives, retorted: "This country is one of the dark spots of the earth." For in our cities, he continued, "the rich and strong live upon the poor and weak, almost as much as in the waters on which they are situated, the great fishes eat up the little ones. The wealthy have more houses than they can live in, the costliest furniture, wardrobes, equipages, while thousands of children of the same Heavenly Father, around them, are houseless and shelterless, naked and hungry. Such is the type of civilization which our example proffers to Africa." And in even more indignant words he took to task men of great wealth, like John Jacob Astor, for their ruthless exploitation of those who created their wealth. It would, I suspect, be hard to find any more uncompromising condemnation of economic capitalism among the radical educators of today than that of this father of our common schools.

Yet these liberal, humanitarian educators generally stopped short with calling attention to some of the obvious abuses. With few exceptions they believed that education could remedy these abuses without changing in any substantial way the framework of the existing system. For this they should not be taken to task: the eighteenth century faith in reason, in enlightenment, was still strong, and continued to be so; and, after all, education had not been given a thorough trial. Yet, almost a hundred years ago, educators of this liberal persuasion were being warned that they were putting the cart before the horse. They were warned that education was functional to the dominant climate of opinion, to the existing order, and that it could not rise above that order.

Yet even when Barnard's attention was specifically and repeatedly called to this argument by his friend, Elijah Grant, an Ohio socialist, his ears were deaf. His educational contemporaries were likewise familiar with this position, for it was advanced by Horace Greeley in his widely read New York *Tribune*; and at least one popular education periodical editorially called attention to the similar arguments of a Boston labor leader, only to dismiss the contention. In more recent times liberal educational leaders have similarly closed their minds to similar arguments made by Henry George and the socialists who, on infrequent occasions to be sure, made their arguments even in conservative educational periodicals and meetings. Even John Dewey, who has more clearly than any of his predecessors diagnosed the ailments of our society, has cherished education, a new type of education if you will, but still education within the existing framework, as not only the preferable but as an effective means to a collectivist order, to the good society.

III.

Under the obvious failure of the older type of education to bring about the good society, educators have elaborated and refined the educational technique that the schools were to use in bringing about that desired end. Mann and Barnard put great reliance on moral training, or character building; the Herbartians thought they had discovered something new in making a similar emphasis; and even exponents of the liberal, humanitarian social philosophy continue today, less naïvely to be sure, to hold that if the right kind of an individual can be trained through the right kind of a school, ipso facto, the good society will be ushered in. They overlook, of course, the fact that the school is but one of the major influences shaping the child's life; and that our existing society not only tolerates but rewards "success" achieved by means that character education in the school would, in the abstract at least, condemn as immoral. The ease of rationalization, the failure to carry over the moral precepts of the schoolroom to different situations in the world outside, have greatly narrowed the effectiveness of this type of education. So, too, the advocates of more realistic social studies run up against pressures that

Howard Beale has described and that greatly weaken the effectiveness of the liberal social philosophy of educators.

2 Educators have found in the attitude they themselves have taken toward controversial issues another barrier to their plan for achieving the good society through the schools. Even before the importance attached by our time to science and objectivity, liberal educators were cautious and tactful when it came to the question of discussing controversial issues in the schools. This care and tact was partly inspired by devotion to the idea of objectivity, tentativeness, and open-mindedness; it was partly dictated by the fear that partisanship, even in behalf of ideals cherished dearly, might alienate the conservative authorities upon whom it was necessary to depend for the support of public education.

Horace Mann well illustrates the barrier imposed by the ideal of disinterestedness and nonpartisanship and by the fear of alienating necessary support. Few educators of our own day have defined more convincingly, have opposed more logically, the bogey of indoctrination. In opposing indoctrination, Mann asked what was worse than to have children see but parts of the truth? Truth-seeking required an impartial and discriminating ability to circumnavigate a problem, to see it in all its completeness. Moreover, if there must be alienation, controversy and discord among men over public issues, the school, at least, should be "sacred from the ravages of the spirit of party and unblasted by the fiery breath of animosity." When Mann's declaration that the schoolroom must expand into the state is recalled, when his statement that the interests of the class room are identical with the great interests of society is remembered, it becomes clear that he faced a dilemma. In practice he refused to have the burning issue of slavery, for example, introduced into even the normal schools. When the head of the Massachusetts normal school, Samuel J. May, took some of his pupils to an abolitionist meeting, he incurred the wrath of Mann, who hated slavery almost as bitterly as May himself did. It must be remembered that abolitionism in that day was extremely unpopular, thoroughly despised by respectable people: it demanded the immediate confiscation of property rights in slaves, and even advocated the break-up of the union if that was a necessary preliminary. So

Mann wrote to May: "I have further plans for obtaining more aid, but the moment it is known or supposed that the cause (of public education) is to be perverted to, or connected with, any of the exciting party questions of the day, I shall never get another cent."

Yet Mann was not irrevocably and absolutely opposed to indoctrination. Indeed, he was so frightened and shocked by the violence evoked by the anti-rent wars, the Dorr rebellion, the Nat Turner affair, and by the violence meted out against abolitionists and Catholics, that he declared that the schools had failed sufficiently to inculcate in the children the idea that violence was never to be resorted to for effecting any change or improvement in their status. Thus he favored indoctrination against the use of violence to effect social change.

The implications are not without their meaning today. If we will substitute communism or militant socialism for abolitionism, Mann's position is that of many liberal educators today who, in the interest of hearing all the facts, seeing all sides of the question, waiting until all the evidence is in, circumnavigating the problem, refuse to have made explicit in the schoolroom the convictions in regard to the bankruptcy of the present order that they entertain in conversing with their friends. Indeed, Mann never denounced capitalism while in educational work as he did while in Congress; and his decision to give up the secretaryship of education in Massachusetts and enter the national legislature was reached by his frank recognition that, as things were, education could not solve the problem of slavery. It must, he concluded, be fought and struck down on the non-educational front.

IV

3 One more barrier to educational leadership in the quest for the good society should be at least briefly mentioned. That is the influence that one's class background has on limiting and conditioning one's social philosophy. While it is true that it is in some cases possible to transcend one's class background, such an achievement in the past has been very exceptional. How class background, sympathies and prejudices fetter social thinking may be illustrated by reference to a beloved and liberal educator who

played a more important rôle in American education than is generally realized.

William James was reared in a family of wealth and culture; it was never his fate to struggle with poverty, or to see its effects at first hand. While he had slight respect for the grasping ways of American business, and denounced "this bitch goddess, Success", and while he sometimes made the genteel tradition look rather ridiculous, he never transcended his feeling, inculcated by his early surroundings, that a gentleman was a gentleman, to the manner born, and that Tom, Dick, and Harry were, after all, Tom, Dick, and Harry. In speaking of some Christian reformers whom he once met at Leipsig, he wrote "*their* sphere is with the masses struggling into light, not with us at Harvard; though I'm glad I can meet them cordially for a while now and then." The condition of being a gentleman carried with it, he wrote, an atmosphere, an outlook, a play that made "the falsest views and tastes somehow in a man of fashion . . . truer than the truest in a plebeian cad."

In romanticizing and idealizing the state of poverty James likewise showed the limitations of his class background. Never having tasted the dregs of poverty, he could declare that a more equitable division of wealth would make no "genuine, vital difference"; that if only the inner interests and ideals of workmen could be aroused, heightened, liberated, their external conditions of toil counted for little. Indeed poverty had such a vicarious value that James half playfully thought the rich would gain if they surrendered their riches and enjoyed the freedom, the nonchalance that poverty in his eyes bestowed. This was all very well for a man who could write to his State Street banker that he didn't want to bother about his financial investments, so long as he could be insured of a comfortable living from the interest alone. But at the moment he penned his inspiring lines about the glories of poverty, the pinch of poverty, sickness without the bare minimum of decent care, squalor, and degradation, shadowed thousands and thousands in Boston's slums just across the Charles. And doubtless a search through the files of newspapers in the hard times of the nineties might reveal, as our metropolitan press this year has revealed, death on the city streets from sheer starvation.

So James, who made the doctrine of the open universe, of open

goals, of the joy of discovery, of the doctrine of live and let live fascinate many who came under his spell, could sincerely teach that the conflict between capital and labor was solely the result of psychological maladjustment—the failure of each to appreciate the inner significance in the lives of the other; could declare that habit is the “enormous fly-wheel of society, its most precious, conservative agent”, which alone “keeps us all within the bounds of ordinance and saves the children of fortune from the envious uprisings of the poor”; and that, furthermore, it was best on the whole that habit held the miner in his darkness, nailed the countryman to his log cabin, doomed us all to fight out the battle of life upon the lines of our nurture or early choice, and to make the best of a pursuit that disagrees because there is no other for which we are fitted. In short, James, with his fine, idealistic and beautiful personality, with his love of fair play, of giving the unpopular side or idea a chance to be heard, with his zeal for open goals openly arrived at, still never transcended the barriers that his class background imposed to an honest, fearless analysis of the society that had treated him so indulgently and so kindly.

These, then, are the chief barriers that, so far as social philosophy are concerned, seem to be imposed on the educators who in this crisis would lead us to the good society. To be effective in a great social crusade they must struggle to overcome the limitations imposed by their class backgrounds on their social outlook; they must beware of the danger of compromising with conservatism in order to maintain their budgets; they must decide whether their fear of indoctrination may in reality be a fear of principles and programs hostile to their own relatively comfortable status in the present order, rationalized into a belief that it is best for all that change come gradually, and by peaceful methods; they must, above all, win over to their own radical position those of their number, perhaps a majority, who still entertain a conservative social philosophy. Unless they are able to do these things, their ability to lead us to utopia must, if the past can be drawn upon for a prediction, be questioned; and the American faith in the efficacy of education as the road to utopia must be modified and other courses surveyed.

by James Granville Southworth

LAURENCE BINYON

ALMOST forty years ago Mr. Laurence Binyon published his first volume of poems. Since that time few years have elapsed in which he has not given us of his store—poetry, plays, and latterly, appreciations on both oriental and occidental art. He has found time for all this in spite of a busy life at the British Museum. He first lectured in America in 1912, repeating his visits in 1914, and 1926. He has once more returned to us. It is unfortunate for Mr. Binyon that he is known to the average reader by his war poems, many of which have already begun to date. There is so much else (of an enduring quality) in his poetry to support us in this seemingly chaotic world. He is distinctively a contemporary poet in that his poetry is his reactions—those of a thoughtful, reflective, sensitive, and courageous man—to the environment of contemporary life. His imagination has been affected by the spiritual and material conditions of the day.

In contrast to the poetry of Mr. T. S. Eliot, Mr. Binyon affects a reconstruction of beauty against the forces of disintegration—forces against which Mr. Eliot seems powerless to act. Mr. Eliot's poetry is a balm to the contemporary who lacks the strength to combat the anti-cultural forces of the present day. Mr. Binyon's poetry is a constant challenge to a fuller life. He sees that in spite of the apparent chaos of twentieth century civilization, beauty, serenity, and the abundant life are still attainable. This idea is clearly stated in the early volumes written before the war, and is as unmistakable and more firmly presented in those written since. I am not concerned in this essay in commenting on the weaknesses of Mr. Binyon's poetry—and there are weaknesses of such magnitude that when we lay aside the volumes we feel that we have been in the presence of a great poet but only occasionally in the presence of great poetry: weaknesses chiefly attributable to lack of condensation and excision. But I wish rather to attempt

a synthesis of Mr. Binyon's poetic thought, because it is the product of a man who has touched life—not drawn away in a feeling of revulsion—and has found it worth while. Life has repaid his courage. When viewed chronologically, a steady growth—at least a constant ripening process—can be seen in his poetry. The fundamental tenets of his philosophy remain unchanged, but those tenets become more subtle with the accretion of years.

I.

There is a fundamental unity of idea which links the poems: it is an adventure of the mind seeking the release of the soul. Although Mr. Binyon is a poet content to work in the great tradition of English poetry with which he is thoroughly imbued, he does not look to the past either as a means of escape from the present or as a period when life was better than it now is. He is content to shoulder the responsibilities of the present. There is the same courage manifest in his work as in that of A. E. Housman. Mr. Eliot tells us in his essay "The Function of Criticism" that "between the true artists of any time there is . . . an unconscious community." That, of course, is not original with Mr. Eliot. In 1817, Shelley stated the idea fully and definitely in the preface to "The Revolt of Islam." "There must be a resemblance," he wrote, "which does not depend upon their own will, between all the writers of any particular age. They cannot escape from subjection to a common influence which arises out of an infinite combination of circumstances belonging to the times in which they live; though each is in a degree the author of the very influence by which his being is thus pervaded." Mr. Eliot limits this community of ideas to the first-rate artists. Here, I believe, he errs, because it is just because the great bulk of our present day literature—"blotterature" is the term John Colet used for it in 1512—contains only the current ideas that it lives but for the moment. Shelley wisely included "all the writers".

I have suggested that many of the poems appear to be linked by a common subject. This is true; but in no poem is the subject fully stated. I do not mean that each poem is not complete in itself, but rather to suggest that in order to arrive at an adequate understanding of the whole corpus of Mr. Binyon's

thought we must acquaint ourselves with more than a few poems. He is not an ascetic nor is he the advocate of ascetism. He keeps near life. He enunciates his main idea in "Porphyryon" (which could with profit be compared with Shelley's "Alastor"), clothes it in modern garb in "The Supper", augments it in "The Renewal", restates the theme with variations in several poems from *Auguries* (particularly "The Tiger Lily"), *The Four Years*, and other volumes, and makes a *rifacimento* in the prelude to "The Sirens". The development of the theme is rich and harmonious. All of Mr. Binyon's poetry fits into his philosophy of life which can be briefly stated as follows—providing, of course, that we make due allowance for the suggestive quality of his language: Happiness and a sense of the completeness of life can belong only to the person of great humanity, the prime requisite for which is an all-comprehending love achieved by a close and sympathetic contact with one's fellows. The timid and weak remain shut out from this happiness because they lack the courage necessary for such a life; without courage, integrity, and will, advance is impossible. The love of humanity is not a theoretic love divorced from the love of the individual, but rather, one might say, is one of the results of personal love. At least they are mutually helpful. Mr. Binyon's merit lies in his individual treatment of the component parts of the foregoing theme. It is clear that he is a democrat of the finest type. Let us examine his poetry with these ideas in mind, beginning with "The Supper" in which both the negative and positive elements are set before the reader in unmistakable terms.

A rich youth accustomed to luxury, dissatisfied with life, and vaguely aware that without humanity and love for his fellows life is incomplete, seizes the idea that he can secure happiness by raising out of their pain some unfortunates from the street . . . Accordingly, he brings to his table a blind beggar, a sandwich-man, a tramp, two women, and a thief who try to be gay at a banquet which he has prepared. Instead of his bringing comfort to them, however, they bring unhappiness to him by forcing him to look into his own soul. The note introduced by the tramp Michael in his toast is of the uncertainty of worldly possessions

and the meaninglessness of the mere acquisition. Michael pledges the host's health:

I drink your good health but be sure of the end.
You never can tell you won't come to the cold,
And the bed from under your body be sold.
You smile at your ease; you pay no heed:
You think to lay hands on all that you need,
And still you go piling your riches high;
But where is the use of it all, say I?

The young host, however, like many in his position, listens politely but unmoved, and apologizes lamely for his sheltered existence in a patronizing tone:

Well said, my friend: you've a heart in your breast;
And a brave heart beating is worth all the rest.
Where is the use of it all? 'Tis true:
But we walk in the way we're accustomed to.

Since it takes courage to lift oneself out of a rut the majority emulate the young host even though they know that by doing so they are denied the happiness that comes from a full life.

In spite of their desire for happiness an unrest seizes the guests as they sit at the table. Annie, the unfortunate, expresses the subconscious feeling of each. In the midst of life on the street the fatigue, the pain, the grief, the fear—all are alleviated. There is a fulness which makes them oblivious of self in the knowledge of being a part of a greater whole. But in the quietness of the room their individual ills assume the ascendancy. Puzzled, Annie muses:

I know not how, but down in the street
'Tis not so heavy a task to meet.
A power beyond me bears me along,
The faint with the eager, the weak with the strong.
'Tis like an army with marching sound;
I march, and my feet forget the ground.
I have no thought, no wish, no fear;
And the others are brave for me. But here,
I know not why, I long to rest;
I have an aching in my breast.
O I am tired! how sweet 'twould be
To yield, to struggle no more, and be free!

A chance remark, reawakening in her the remembrance of her earlier life and causing her to suffer again her individual tragedy, arouses her to anger, and in despair she seeks relief in the crowded streets. Unrest is likewise sown in the hearts of the other guests

who in turn revile their host. The shallowness of his humanity is revealed in his pique against them and his weak defense that he pitied them. Averill, the sandwich-man, replies that pity is all right, "but it will not hold men up from hell." He and his companions are Necessity's children and her mark is ever on them. When she calls, says Averill,

We must not tarry.
We must take up our yoke again,
With labouring feet for ever
To follow her triumph's train

To follow her sleepless course,
And to fall when she decrees
With wailing that no man hearkens,
With trappings that no man sees.

He who will help them out of the slough and assist them in setting their feet in the way to follow their far desire must be a man of courage, a man who knows that there is no "relish keener than the pang of useless pain" and "no spice more rare" than that rained by tears of wisdom.

This idea of being Necessity's children recalls Godwin's *Political Justice* and its chapter on Necessity. It is an idea which appeals generally to young people and to those not strong enough to back the current of circumstance and environment. Wordsworth eagerly embraced the doctrine in his youth but later discarded it. The facile critic who tosses it lightly aside does not as a rule consider deeply enough the influences of heredity and environment. On the other hand, he who embraces it whole-heartedly overlooks certain inherent characteristics of man's nature. For poetical purposes, however, there is no need to cavil at the idea.

Averill invites the young host to "eat of the mad desire", the terrors that haunt them, the torment that will not let them die, all the experiences of life—which result in wisdom. But the host, lacking the courage to live, is unable to accept Averill's invitation—Averill the young poet who knows life: Averill who is Binyon or what Binyon might wish to be. "I thought that I could love my kind!" mutters the host to himself when alone, his head buried in his hands:

Love is vast, and I was blind.
O mighty world, my weakness spare!
This love is more than I can dare.

The theme that happiness, or at least satisfaction, can come only to those who have the courage to drink deeply of life is not a new one. It is a favorite subject with poets who give to it their individual touch. Wordsworth's "Lines written on a Seat under a Yew Tree" is only one example.

But what can this Necessity about which Averill speaks do? To the man of courage who flings wide his arms in eager expectation it can bring the "lovely joy" that rises from the transmutation of all experiences. He who does not play the game of evasion will feel as he delves deeper into life his own life "open like a flower" within him.

II.

I have dealt at thus great length with this early poem because it contains many of the phases of Mr. Binyon's attitude towards life. The poem is the impassioned expression of a youth filled with noble aims. The language is simple and clear and points very definitely the course Mr. Binyon's later poetry is to follow: the thought deepens, the expression becomes subtler and concentrated, the prosody less facile but more flexible. We can compare him to a young tennis player full of fire and speed but not yet mature in his generalship; the later work loses some of the youthful spontaneity but gains from better judgment, a keener eye, and richer experience. And like a tennis player, too, he has his off moments when he misses, but these we must overlook and remember, instead, the numerous times when he rouses enthusiasm by his brilliant strokes.

In the prelude to "The Sirens"—one of Mr. Binyon's later works—it is not difficult to imagine that it is Averill of "The Supper"—Averill grown older—who sings

... the flesh is no longer a home, nor can comforting Earth
Shelter me more.
I am known to the Unknown, chosen, charmed, endangered:
I flow to a music ocean-wild and starry,
And feel within me, for this mortality's answer,
Sea without shore.

Of course this plunge into the stream of life exacts a great toll, and a regenerating influence is frequently necessary. What is the source of this influence? Certainly not in the sheltered room of the young host! But rather it is found where Wordsworth found it: in nature in all her manifestations, but more particularly in the sunlight. The young poet of "The Renewal" shows himself as ardent a sun-worshipper as the enthusiastic youth of to-day. "I need", he cries,

I need each beam of the young sun; I need
Each draught of the pure wind, whereon to feed
My joy; each sparkle of the dew that shines
Under your branches, dark, sun-drunken pines.
All voices, motions of the unwearied sea;
But most, O tender spirit,¹ I need thee.

The courageous youth, realizing his affinity to him who lifted a moment on the waves has a sudden glimpse of boundless skies, exclaims in a passage strongly recalling the phraseology of Shelley and Keats:

Now is mere breathing joy; and all that strife
Confused and darkling, that we miscall life
Is as a cloak, cast off in the warm spring.
Thus to possess the sunlight, is a thing
Worth more than our ambitions; more than ease
Wrung from the despot labor, the stale lees
Of youthful bliss . . .
And, O more precious even yet than this,
Empowers our weakness to support in bliss
The immensity of love, to love in vain
Yet still to hunger for that priceless pain;
To love without a bound, to set no end
To our long love, never aside to bend
In loving, but pour forth in living streams
Our hearts, as the full morn in quenchless beams.
He that this light has tasted, asks no more
Dim questions answerless, that have so sore
Perplexed our thinking: in his bosom flow
Springs of all knowledge he hath need to know.

It is interesting to note in passing that Mr. Eliot exhibits none of this love for or dependence on nature which looms so largely in Mr. Binyon's work.

How is one to achieve this great experience without which life is only half lived? The answer is scattered among many of Mr. Binyon's shorter poems. He must possess integrity of mind and

¹The sun.

action. He must divest himself of the thoughts that are not his and of beliefs which he affirms but which his deeper consciousness cannot accept, because such are of death—the death that has no aim. The lover—and we have seen how much is required of him—is “always young and wise” (“The Snows of Spring”). Not “Earth’s sad bondage, nor pious walls of Time, nor the gates of Death” hold any fears for him, because, sings the poet in rapturous lines:

For the marvel that was most marvellous is most true;
To the music that moves the universe moves my heart,
And the song of the starry worlds I sing apart
In the night and shadow and stillness, Love, for you.
(A Hymn of Love)

I have said that courage is a constant note in Mr. Binyon’s poetry. To the man who lacks it, he tells us in “Santa Christina,”

Dark is the world to the weak will
As to feet stumbling on a hill
Benighted, when no stars appear,

but to the possessor, and especially in young and frail bodies is the beauty of courage “seen and sung”.

There, like a fountain ever new,
Thou dost scatter sunny dew,
Troubling our self-bewildered night
With simplicity of light.

In “Sorrow”, Mr. Binyon elaborates the idea of the necessity for an all-comprehending humanity. It is worthwhile quoting the poem for the greater clarity it gives to his poetic ideas:

Woe to him that has not known the woe of man,
Who has not felt within him burning all the want
Of desolated bosoms, since the world began,
Felt, as his own, the burden of the fears that daunt;
Who has not eaten failure’s bitter bread, and been
Among those ghosts of hope that haunt the day, unseen.

Only when we are hurt with all the hurt untold,—
In us the thirst, the hunger, and ours the helpless hands,
The palsied effort vain, the darkness and the cold,—
Then, only then, the Spirit knows and understands,
And finds in every sigh breathed out beneath the sun
The human heart that makes us infinitely one.

Elsewhere he tells us that he who would know the mystery of the world must search “those deep regions . . . where lives are herded, ignorant what they are,” and must put on “their being . . . if [he]

would know humanity" ("The Renewal"); he must search the world "whose wrong Mocks holy beauty and our desire" ("A Vision of Resurrection"), aware that "life is all a cheapening And the Rain is over everything, And there is neither mirth nor woe" ("The Tram"), yet he must never lose sight of the gleam however hard beset by the question of responsibility, "Who made it so, who made it so?"

The way is not always smooth even for the courageous. There are times when, still desiring to forge ahead, we are daunted by the world which seems to come "as an army against us." When such happens who has not longed then "for a strength past pain To endure the rending of sorrow that makes hope vain, To be kneaded in iron and stubborned in armour of stone" ("Auguries VIII")? Mr. Binyon recognizes that once a person has undergone a purification of his dross through the agency of the sharp realities of life, be it in peace or war, he is ever more eager to fulfill his high destiny in life:

. . . if torn and bruised
The heart, more urgent comes our cry
Brain, sinew, and spirit, before we die.
Beat out the iron, edge it keen,
And shape us to the end we mean!
(*"The Anvil"*)

I find for my thought not a close,
For my soul not an end,
With you¹ will I follow, nor crave
the strength of the strong
Nor a fortress of time to enshield me
from storms that rend.
This is life, this is home, to be poured
as a stream, as a song.
(*"Auguries XI"*)

If we link certain lines of "Past and Future" in which the poet tells us that we are unable to foresee the effects of our acts upon others; and that even our most insignificant deeds often have such far-reaching results that when instead of their influence ending it is just beginning—if, I say, we link those lines with the foregoing, we have one conception of immortality. Our immortality depends on the influence we exert on others, and every person exerts some kind of influence, good or bad. There is sufficient justification for living as fine lives as we are able if by doing so we are raising the standards of the world. It is as if each of us

¹O waters swift.

were a drop of water from a full vessel. By our worthy actions in this world the drop representing us is purified, and when it is reabsorbed into the full vessel the whole will be affected slightly. This is not quite the same thing as the general soul about which Tennyson speaks in "I'm Memorian". In the beautiful but uneven "The Mirror II", Mr. Binyon throws additional light on this subject. The soul cries:

I that am want, I that am grief,
 I that am love, I that am mirth,
 I that am fear, I that am fire,
 Though thou clothe me in beauty brief,
 Though I have worn thy sweet attire,
 I, thy endless sorrow, Earth,
 Dwell in the glory of God's desire,
 That kneads forever in the flesh
 Of man, to make his spirit afresh,
 A marvel more than all the wandering seas
 And mightier than thy caverned mysteries,
 Nor stays nor sleeps, but world on world transfuses
 Melted ever to diviner uses,
 Through infinite swift changes burning,
 Itself the end, no end discerning,
 Till all the universe be wrought
 Into its far perfecting thought.
 Then this mind of cloud and rue
 Shall in eternal mind be new,
 Mirror of God, pure and alone,
 See and be seen, know and be known.

The aim of the soul is its constant striving towards perfection. Of course, the poet tells us, no man has ever seen his soul except for a brief glimpse in the night. To see it as it really is "eternity must enter him". Mr. Binyon's thought is inseparable from his diction and any attempt at separation results but in a partial truth. Through the suggestive powers of his language he helps us to extend our vision.

Love—we should remember that to our poet "light, life, and love" are one—is one of the most potent means for uplifting the soul. In many lyrics of surpassing beauty and tenderness the purifying influence of love is presented to us. In "Parting and Meeting", "Day's End", and "The Crucible" he reveals how, because love came,

... my soul hath taken wings,
 Newly bathed in light intense.

Only he who has loved deeply can appreciate the sentiment expressed in "I want a thousand things tonight".

Hungers, despairs, and victories,
And all the world's glories and alarms,
Forget their wound and find their prize
But on your lips, but in your arms,

or will agree that

Life has no more to give that the sweet sound
Breaking and melting deep in my heart's heart,
(*"Flowers and Voice"*)

the sound being his Love's voice uttering "words of no art" at his knee. Again, he tells us, that truth is found only "where the heart runs to be poured utterly". The apotheosis of love is expressed in the final stanza of *"The Crusader"*. It is clear, I think, that Mr. Binyon is the poet of completion as contrasted to Mr. Eliot, the poet of frustration.

III.

I have mentioned that in Mr. Binyon's poetry nature serves many uses. He is an ardent lover not only of her larger aspects but of her minutiae as well. Because he loves her there is an exciting freshness in his images. He employs her in his poetry in many ways: as a great healer and interpreter of life in such poems as *"The Renewal"*, *"The Tiger Lily"*, *"The Snows of Spring"*, *"Morn like a Thousand Spears"*; as a subject for landscape and a setting for love poems in *"Between the mountains and the plain"*, *"Ferry Hinksey"*, or *"An Hour"*; and as embellishment. Frequently use is made of all forms in one poem. His images from the light, the night, and the sea awaken in us the memories of our own experience. In one brief passage he conveys the infinite of the starry sky: "How huge and still Night sleeps"! . . .

Ten thousand stars through height on height
Burn over us, how breathless and how bright!
Some mild, some fevered, some august and large,
Royal and blazing like a hero's targe,
Some faint and secret, from abysses brought,
Lone as an incommunicable thought!
They throng, they reign, they droop, they bloom, they glow
Upon our gaze, and as we gaze they grow
In patience and in glory, till the mind
Is brimmed and to all other beings blind;
They hang, they fall towards us, spears of fire
Piercing us through with joy and with desire.
(*"Sirmione"*)

We feel the salt breeze in our faces as we sit watching

... the full waves towering toward the shore,
Heaved up and ever falling in dumb roar,
And snowed into a thousand stormy drops.
(*"Queen Venus"*)

And in the exquisite restraint of the "Lament"—a poem worthy to be placed by the side of "Rose Aylmer" and "Requiescat"—the figure of the snow harmonizes beautifully with the character of the thought:

Fall now, my cold thoughts, frozen fall
My sad thoughts, over my heart,
To be the tender burial
Of sweetness and of smart.

Fall soft as snow, when all men sleep,
On copse and on bank forlorn,
That tenderly buries, yet buries deep
Frail violets, freshly born.

There are innumerable sustained similes scattered throughout the poems as well as epithets which remind us that the poet has trained a steady, clear-seeing eye on the objects he describes. There are the "stubborn arms" and the "terraced boughs" of the cedars of Lebanon (*"The Death of Adam"*), the "little fronds almost uncurled Where still the dead brown bracken's lying" (*"The Tram"*), the fallen leaf "fair with rime" on the grey sand path (*"The Unreturning Spring"*), and Oxford the "city white with spires" (*"Ferry Hinksey"*). Mr. Binyon is also able to create the mood of a poem and direct the tone of our thoughts by his rare descriptive ability not only of natural phenomena but of the phenomena which are the essence of daily life. The entire poem *"Midsummer Noon"*, the monks in *"S. Francesco del Deserto"*, the progress of the day in the poem of the same name, the lush May evening in *"A Hymn of Love"*, the children just emerged from the dark standing dazzled in *"The Belfry"*, and the little dancers in the poem of the same name are but a few examples.

I have mentioned that Mr. Binyon is well known for his war poems. Save for a very few, I think these poems will date sooner than much of his earlier work. In general, there is neither the clear perspective, nor the depth, nor the recollected passion which we find in his other poems. But in *"Morn like a Thousand Spears"*, *"Strike Stone on Steel"*, and *"The Unreturning Spring"*,—poems which will rank with his finest—the idea expressed is that

war is an interlude in the constant search for the fulfillment of life in which man is testing himself. For a moment, man, "simple and brave . . . the soarer, free of heavens to roam in" who has a world of light in which to home is confounding day with darkness, but only momentarily. Viewed in its place in *The Four Years*, "The Fallen", one of Mr. Binyon's most popular lyrics, recedes in importance.

Mr. Binyon will be classed as a subjective poet (I say with Fitzgerald, "Damn the word!"), but there are poems like the perfect "The Little Dancers" which are objective. But in using the terms "subjective" and "objective" I feel much as Fitzgerald did when the terms came into general use almost a hundred years ago. I use them because "people begin to fancy they understand what [they] mean." Personally, I know no poet who is wholly one or the other, and any writer who looks as steadily at the object as Mr. Binyon does must have much objectivity.

Many divergent tendencies are successfully fused in the poet's work. In the earlier poems the influences are somewhat apparent, just as those in Keats's early work; but in his finest lyrics, again just as in Keats's Odes, the influences are thoroughly assimilated and we have a new voice. Mr. Binyon's ultimate position will probably rest on his shorter poems. None of his long ones is wholly successful, yet each reveals the unmistakable characteristics of his finest lyrics. In the earlier poems Keats of the Odes, Shelley of "Alastor", "Adonais", and the lyrics, Milton of "Lycidas", "Paradise Lost", and "Paradise Regained", the elegiac quality of Arnold, the meditative quality of Wordsworth, the ecstatic quality of Tennyson's "Maud", as well as reminiscences of his contemporaries, are evident; yet in no mere slavish imitation. They are evident because in all sensitive people like Mr. Binyon the mind is capable of receiving subtle impressions. At the time he wrote, those impressions were not yet completely absorbed. In his treatment of nature, for example, he could be shown to parallel the methods of such widely divergent writers as Marvell, Vaughan, and Wordsworth. But what would it amount to? Merely that Mr. Binyon has felt the divergent tendencies about him. He does not hearken to one voice and only one. Even in the early poems, however, a distinctive note is clearly visible.

In the matter of prosody, too, Mr. Binyon has done much ex-

perimenting. There are several different tones in his blank verse. His couplets possess freedom and can be either grave or spirited. He can use the strophic form successfully, yet some of his short lyrics in conventional meters are the finest things he has done. There are times, however, when he attempts stanza forms of such complexity that the subject matter cannot stand the strain. His "To a Summer Night" with its occasional internal rhymes and elaborate form is but one instance. In his later work the structural form becomes freer, the voice surer, and as a result we have such moving poetry as we find in the prelude to "The Sirens". In this freer form and in many of the lyrics of conventional mould, Mr. Binyon's voice is decidedly worth listening to.

I think it must be generally admitted that in the poems of Mr. Binyon we have the proper subject matter for great poetry. The sum total of the effect of his work is greater than that of any single poem, due to the presence of much that is uninspired or at least unsuccessful. There is little "pure" poetry where the words quiver on the verge of song and where the magic of the arrangement transcends the meaning. In a judicious selection of his work Mr. Binyon will appear a greater poet than his complete works will permit us to believe. His genius, like that of most modern poets, reveals itself best in his short lyrics where the tone is always dignified, sometimes elegiac, frequently impassioned, and in a few cases ecstatic. The poems reveal a man of quiet courage, tenderness, sympathy, and humanity. He is the apostle of "sweetness and light" in its finest sense, yet recognizes with Mr. Santayana that "an inexperienced mind remains a thin mind, no matter how much its vapor may be heated and blown about by the natural passion". The poems reflect the tendencies and thoughts of his age not only in their images but in their greater freedom of form. Mr. Binyon will take his place in the tradition of English poetry. Just where that place will eventually be must be left to the siftings of time "who chooseth all in the end well".

Mr. Binyon is as acutely aware of the barrenness of present day life as Mr. Eliot. But he sees that there is also richness and sets the ideal towards which we are to strive. In his "Alas! what dungeon walls we rear" he warns us of the pass to which we have come; realizing which,

Then we shall feel what we have made
Of one another, and be afraid.

(“Auguries IV”)

He chooses, however, to dwell on the remedy for such spiritual dryness. In two short lyrics, “Song”, “Nothing is Enough”, he points the way we must go.

For Mercy, Courage, Kindness, Mirth
There is no measure upon earth;
Nay, they wither, root and stem,
If an end be set to them.
Overbrim and overflow
If your own heart you would know.
For the spirit, born to bless,
Lives but in its own excess.

Nothing is enough!
No, though our all be spent—
Heart's extremest love,
Spirit's whole intent,
All that nerve can feel,
All that brain invent,—
Still beyond appeal
Will divine Desire
Yet more excellent
Precious cost require
Never be content
Of this mortal stuff,—
Till ourselves be fire.
Nothing is enough!

by Robert E. Brittain

TWO POEMS

I

A time and times and a half
is the length of our love:

Our banners are blue as the turquoise
and white are our feet on the beaches of our desire
belovéd belovéd
ordeals of fire could not purge to a purer gold
the links of our love.

But the seven stars have pointed no north to our wandering
for that the lurch of the world has shifted the pole.

What man can twist the bones of his foot
till the heel is forward,
or who can turn his eye-balls and peer out
through the hair of his crown?

A love and loves and the dividing of love
shall be our recompense and all our fruition.

The husks of our hearts whiten as dead shells do:
they litter the beach of our love.

II

There being on this promontory
stone

granite rubbed by time and the glisten of sunlight on it
and under the glaze under the hot press of it on the foot
the vein running deep deep to the moveless core
beneath the mountains
beneath the unquiet sea

And to the left far down
the little boats
cockleshells
red and white green and white
bobbing like fish corks

There are no flowers on this hill
the grass has been cropped to the root by the wild goats

And if you do not look down to the sea
you can believe that nothing will move again ever
not even the stone

by Frederick Horner Bunting

CAPITALISM COLLAPSING?

THE COMING AMERICAN REVOLUTION. By George Soule. New York: The Macmillan Company. 1934. Pp. 304.

NEW FRONTIERS. By Henry A. Wallace. New York: Renal and Hitchcock, 1934. Pp. 287.

The divergence of opinion expressed in these two books, as to the probable outcome of the profit system, is provocative because the analysis of *laissez-faire* capitalism and the exposure of its contradictions and weaknesses in them are quite similar. Both authors dissent from the rugged and often barbarous private capitalism of pre-depression days. Mr. Wallace, as becomes a New Deal Secretary, hopes and inclines to believe that the private profit-system can, through governmental interference and regulation, be made to give an adequate amount of economic security and satisfaction to the mass of people. Mr. Soule, on the other hand, is among those who would like to see capitalism superseded by some sort of socialism, and his thesis is that such a change in our economy is in the nature of the inevitable.

In developing his coming-American-revolution thesis, Mr. Soule adopts the well-known, if not entirely reliable, method of historical analogy. The nature of this analogy should be noted in passing; but since conceivably we might be caught up in the toils of a revolution without there having ever been one before, the main argument ought to revolve around the economic factors in contemporary life. Mr. Soule's examination of four modern revolutions reveals the essentially evolutionary nature of revolutions. All of them—The Puritan Revolution in 17th Century England, the American Revolution, the French and the Russian—all show four distinct stages of development before reaching a 'crisis' which resulted in an overturn of the reigning powers. The four stages are:

- 1) Basic changes in the socio-economic system, resulting

usually from successful practical applications of scientific discoveries;

- 2) The formation of new class-alignments;
- 3) Attacks on the foundations of the existing System by writers and speakers;
- 4) Legal reforms forced upon the system by the discontents.

These steps require several generations sometimes but, finally, one of the reform groups will be sufficiently large and well organized to take over control of affairs, during one of the existing system's occasional breakdowns.

Applying this 'pattern' to contemporary America, we are, says Mr. Soule, well through the first stage. Basic economic conditions have greatly changed, during the past generation. The productive efficiency of workers has jumped over twenty-five percent, in the face of a relative decline in the population and unaccompanied by an increase in the total amount of wages sufficient to buy all the finished goods coming to the markets. This improved technique in production demands flexibility in prices, credit, incomes and investment, if the system of private enterprise is to work adequately. But no such flexibility exists, as the recurring depressions—especially the last one—perfectly illustrate. For this reason, Mr. Soule continues, we have entered upon the second, third and fourth stages of revolution. The fourth stage, in which legal reforms are enacted in the interest of the masses, has only just begun.

Mr. Soul's argument does not end here, but it seems to me that this is the point at which the critical point of the argument appears. So far, the argument is convincing and so far, it expresses Secretary Wallace's opinion, that if capitalistic economy is allowed to work blindly, it works badly. The burden of proof clearly rests upon anyone who would deny that great technological improvements in methods of production have, during the last generation, basically changed our way of life and that if properly handled could provide even the poorest with a high standard of living. Mr. Walter Polakov, Mr. Stuart Chase, and others have for some time been showing us the truth of this contention, and now comes a report from the National Survey of Potential Pro-

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duct Capacity Board which should remove doubt from even the most sceptical. And one can readily admit that the other three stages of 'revolution' have been reached. But even so it may be doubted that the final 'crisis' is so inevitably ahead of us.

For all his historical analogy, Mr. Soule himself admits the possibility of capitalism saving itself. But, he says, it can only do so by submitting to so much governmental regulation of prices, profits, wages, and production that the business executive would become "virtually a salaried manager". As for what capitalism *will* do; "Business and finance are no more ready to lose their property by this roundabout route than they are to lose it by outright confiscation". Consequently, business men will do their level best to defeat the workings of reforms and will, at least, succeed in bringing on other depressions until one fine day their intellectual bankruptcy is discovered and they are ousted from power.

But Mr. Soule has overlooked at least one thing that the government can do (so has the government, for that matter), and there is some evidence that he has understated what capitalism will do to save itself.

What the government can do in the interest of continuous distribution of goods is to undertake a constructive monetary policy. Mr. Soule leaves monetary policy out of his proposals probably because he has confined his attention to the inflationist school of which Professor Warren is, lately, the most notorious example. Recommendations made some years ago—and since—by Mr. J. M. Keynes, the English economist, however, hold great promise. The substance of Keynes' proposals is that the Central Bank (say, the Federal Reserve System in the United States) can, within given bounds, control the rate of investment and can, thereby, have a powerful, though indirect, influence upon price-levels, and employment. It would exercise this control of investment by pursuing a steadfast policy of open-market transactions, manipulation of the re-discount rate, and coöperating with foreign Central Banks to prevent the exchanges from getting out of kilter. It was contemplated that such a monetary policy would be carried on in conjunction with public works activities, the supervision and control of wages, prices, and profits.

As for what capitalism will do to prevent catastrophe, two

examples show that it will put up with a remarkable amount of governmental interference: (1) The Bankhead Bill, which forced restriction of crop acreage; (2) examination of cotton textile factories' account-books by the Federal Trade Commission to determine whether textile workers have a just claim for higher weekly wages. If it be objected by Mr. Soule and the other socialists that Capitalism will have to submit to a good deal more than that, one might point out, reform government is only a little over a year and a half old.

It was said above that Secretary Wallace's argument was similar to Mr. Soule's in that it pointed out contradictions and weaknesses in the capitalistic system. That is true; but the emphasis is somewhat different. Mr. Wallace, as Secretary of Agriculture, is naturally more interested in those policies which have been inconsistent with Agricultural well-being than with the problems arising out of technological improvements in manufacturing industries. He likes to talk about balancing the national income fairly between the industries. Our agricultural industry was built up on foreign markets. It was handicapped by high production costs resulting from high tariffs, but it grew anyhow. Now the markets are gone and the production costs and the cost of debts is still high. So that unless the farmers are to be completely ruined, crops and costs have to be reduced. Or, in other words, too much of the national income has been going to manufacture, too little to agriculture, and the government simply must step in and restore the balance of incomes—all with the consent of the people. Here is Mr. Wallace at his best, and his best is as nearly incontrovertible as anything I know. But Mr. Wallace's plea for a balanced income as between industries, fair though it be, does not argue for another kind of balance of incomes which must somehow be managed, if we are to avoid the final—"crisis"—stage of revolution which Mr. Soule has predicted. That other important 'balance' is the balance between those who spend their money on consumers' goods and those who spend most of it on producers' goods (as the economists say), that is, the balance between the workers' and the *rentiers'* incomes.

Mr. Wallace is, of course, not oblivious to this second 'balance',

but his passing recognition of it is nearly forgotten in his preoccupation with the industrial balance of incomes. One of the indices in the Appendix of *New Frontiers* shows that between 1929 and 1933 dividend and interest payments by corporations remained the same, on an average; wage pay-rolls *dropped* more than 50%. This kind of un-balance cannot continue if capitalism is to survive. And the mere attainment of balance among industries will not ensure the other balance. Indeed, the government's effort to set up a better balance between manufacture and agriculture, through the reduction of crop acreage, actually lowered the incomes of thousands of "renters" and farm workers. Since Mr. Wallace has not shown how 'class incomes' (if the use of this term may be forgiven) can be brought into balance, it is to be hoped that some other New Dealer will do so. In showing how industrial incomes may be balanced, Mr. Wallace has done the electorate a signal service and he has, incidentally, shown himself to be probably the most intelligent of the President's Cabinet.

Thus, *New Frontiers* is in a measure an answer to *The Coming American Revolution*. It is not a complete, nor the only answer from capitalism, but it surely describes the kind of things which capitalism may do to prevent a revolution. I conclude, then, that if Section 7a of the N. R. A. (or some equivalent measure) is enforced and if a balance of industrial incomes is maintained we shall have no revolution.

Other things ought to be said about both books. Both, for instance, give a resumé of what the New Deal has done to improve economic conditions, and both of these resúmes can be read to advantage. It ought also to be said, perhaps, that the movement of thought in Mr. Soule's book far surpasses that of Mr. Wallace's. *New Frontiers* bears marks of patchwork in its loose construction and in repetition to a fault. Mr. Soule's book, on the other hand, is unified, comprehensive and coherent throughout. If both were best-sellers one could think that the American public was interested in the important trends of economic thought today.

by Robert W. Babcock

THE TWICKENHAM BARD

THE EARLY CAREER OF ALEXANDER POPE. By George Sherburn: Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1934. Pp. viii. 326.

Professor Sherburn's new book is a definitive study of the early life of Pope. Its scholarship is unimpugnable, its style "ne'er so well express'd", its appeal distinctly stimulating from beginning to end. At last one gets a fair estimate of the young Pope—an estimate which in understanding and sympathy far eclipses anything heretofore produced on Pope, except possibly Edith Sitwell's late rhapsody, which of course was the product of a poetic woman's brilliant intuition and not of a great scholar's penetrating creative insight.

Mr. Sherburn carries Pope from "the beginnings" to 1727. His *Introduction* is an amazingly erudite study of "Earlier Biographies"; his first chapter treats of Pope's "Family and Childhood" in further startling detail (one learns, for example, that Pope's great-great-grandfather was a blacksmith, his grandfather an Anglican minister, and his mother one of fifteen sisters). The next chapter discusses "Making Friends, 1705-15", and Mr. Sherburn here has added a fourth group to the three mentioned in his Thomas Nelson Company *Selections* of 1929. The subsequent chapters include: "The Scriblerus Club," "Early Poems", "Addison, the Little Senate, *et al*", "Enter Edmund Curll: 1716", "Routine and Unrest", "'A Mere Editor'", "The Ethics of Collaboration", and finally, "Life at Twickenham". Of these certainly the fifth, about Addison, is the most brilliant of all, with the tenth (and last) following closely next. Chapter VI (Curll) seems a little complex and dull, but the book as a whole is a piece of vital scholarly art that should be read slowly and carefully to gain the full appreciation of its finely comprehensive scope.

Mr. Sherburn's brilliant scholarship appears most conspicuously

in the extensive use of contemporary newspapers, Parish Registers, Chancery Court Proceedings, and new Pope correspondence. By virtue of these materials he is able to lay low, for example, the Elwin-Courthope maliciousness on Pope's letters—these nineteenth century editors themselves doctored up four letters to make one, so why should we worry about Pope's similar activities, in a period, especially, when letters were always revised for publication anyway? These same materials enable Mr. Sherburn to trace step by step, the jockeying for position by the rival translators of the *Iliad* in 1715—the Tickell-Addison, Button's-Coffee-House Crew versus Pope and his friends—in that excellent fifth chapter (which reads like an engrossing modern mystery yarn, unravelling clue after clue), and thus definitely to discount Mr. R. E. Tickell's recent plea that his ancestor knew nothing about the impending appearance of Pope's translation. Mr. Sherburn's meticulous accuracy appears in such a note as that on p. 123 (he distinguishes distinctly the two Burnetts, Tom and William), and his scrupulous fairness in such remarks as: "The original document I have not seen" (p. 129n), "In quoting I have ventured to emend *javour* to *savour*" (p. 102n), and "It is doubtless brutal, and unscriptural, to call anyone, especially a critic, a fool; but most of us win the appellation at some time. Dennis won it often, but he was never called a fool more artistically than on this occasion" (p. 110).

Certain aspects of the young Pope stand out in new relief as one finishes this book. The persistent Catholic problem is one (both mother and father were Catholics), with its resultant doubling of taxes, attacks on Pope's religion, and even Catholic demurrals at the poetry itself. Pope's disease—"Pott's disease"—is another; its effect on both verse and physique Mr. Sherburn traces sympathetically. Then Pope's social gifts, his tremendous interest in gardening, his hitherto unidentified but possible contributions to the *Spectator*, his actually smaller profits from the *Odyssey* than heretofore suspected, even his naughty verse—all these are new points or emphases that are exceedingly interesting. With regard to Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, Mr. Sherburn prefers the satire-refusal explanation of the rift, and he ably defends Martha Blount from scandalous gossip. Even the Curll chapter,

an anti-climax to Chapter V, has its complicated discoveries that will be extremely valuable to future scholars.

All through this complex scholarship Mr. Sherburn is always his fine, urbane self. Anyone who knows him will appreciate his own piquantly individual style. Perhaps the cleverest single touch of it comes in the ascription of *A True Character of Mr. Pope to Dennis* (p. 178), because "it is done," says Mr. Sherburn, "*Dennisissime!*" His modern touches are distinctly amusing: "Literary factories such as those of Smollett, Dumas, or Edgar Wallace" (p. 248); "there is probably nothing like heavy taxation to make persons of comfortable incomes feel poor"; (p. 230); "in his [Dennis'] days England was not being 'Americanized' by the cinematograph" (p. 89). He calls the Addison-Pope quarrel "gang warfare", but his choicest modern quip is, in defence of Addison: "The present century perhaps underestimates the achievement of true decorum, the ability always to do the correct thing and to say the correct thing; to reprove without heat or malice and to praise justly, elegantly, and—here is the danger—with no surplusage of effusiveness" (p. 65).

There are only a few questions that disturb the present reviewer. If Pope knew Wycherley so well (p. 54), why didn't he save him from Capt. Shrimpton's wretched marriage machinations? What proof is there that Hughes edited the *Hamlet* "edition of 1703" (p. 245)? Wasn't Gay's *Beggar's Opera* also a product, indirectly perhaps, of the Scriblerus Club (p. 80)? Should not more space have been given to the theory of translation (p. 267)? Why didn't Mr. Sherburn repeat or develop further his excellent idea about Walpole's hiring hacks to attack Pope,¹ previously suggested in his Thomas Nelson Company *Selections* (1929), p. xxxviii? Why does he assign *To a Young Lady with the Works of Voiture* to Martha Blount (p. 98), whereas the Cambridge Edition of Pope gives it to Teresa? Similarly, why does he assign "To a Young Lady On Her Leaving Town after the Coronation" to Teresa Blount (p. 201), whereas Mr. Crane in his *Harper Collection* (1932), gives it to Martha? What is the meaning of this sentence: "Since three of these four [Scriblerus

¹There are minor references to this idea on pp. 184 and 225 of this new book.

Club meetings] fell on Saturdays, we may assume that the Club was designed to assemble the Lord Treasurer's poets and leave to the cabinet his dinners of Saturday" (p. 78)? Is the following an unhappy colloquialism, or just as anglicism: "In 1711, when every one had advised him to leave Dennis alone, he had subsided . . ." (p. 104)? But all these questions are probably the muddled worries of an overworked and over-scrupulous reviewer. There is no question, however, about two misprints on pp. 81 and 183.

Mr. Sherburn has written: "To judge Pope by romantic criteria is of course to condemn him by the laws of a country in which he was no citizen" (p. 18). The splendid review of his book in the *London Times Literary Supplement* for October 25, 1934, ably supports him. He has indicated that his book "is in no sense an attempt at a definitive treatment of Pope's early life" (p. 25). Here he is too modest.* He adds that the book "does seek to show the influence of his [Pope's] environment on the direction of his genius toward satire", but, he continues, "I do not expect to revolutionize the conceptions that have been current concerning Pope's character. I do hope, however, to correct them by placing him in a more detailed environment than he has yet been seen in." The present reviewer believes he has succeeded—magnificently. Only one possible, final treatment of Pope's early career remains: "Of the life of the small boy we know nothing except what Joseph Spence later collected by way of anecdote. Mrs. Rackett told him of various escapes the child had—once from a wild cow, which when 'driven by the place where he was at play, struck at him with her horns, tore off his hat, wounded him in the throat, . . . and trampled over him'." Who, pray, will now do the very obvious: psychoanalyze young Pope on the basis of this attack (to prove him cowardly of course), à la W. E. Leonard and *The Locomotive God*?

*An excellent minor illustration of Mr. Sherburn's persistent modesty appears on p. 6, where Gildon's *Memoirs of Wycherley* is dated 1718 without the slightest reference in a footnote to Mr. Sherburn's own conclusive establishing of that date in the *TLS*, May 11, 1922.

by Austin Warren

A PAIR OF AUGUSTAN STUDIES

ENGLISH BURLESQUE POETRY: 1700-1750. By Richmond P. Bond. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. 1932. Pp. 483. \$3.50.

THE CLUBS OF AUGUSTAN LONDON: By Robert J. Allen. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. 1933. Pp. 305. \$3.00.

The two books before us began as Harvard dissertations, and now appear, as Volumes VI and VII, in the handsome and durable, if somewhat austere, red binding of the "Harvard Studies in English," where they receive abetment from the excellent paper and typography invariably provided by the University Press.

Mr. Bond has written an able and really clarifying study of a theme significant for all students of Augustan literature. Possessed of the adequate learning, he proceeded to order his materials and his mind; and his book gratifyingly escapes pedantry and muddle, to achieve definition and relevant illustration.

In his researches, Bond pursued two general objectives: to discern the nature of burlesque—distinguishing, meanwhile, the subspecies of the *genre*; and to examine all specimens of the 'Kind' existent in his terrain. Doubtless these two purposes were pursued concomitantly in his reading; but when he came to compose his book, he judged, soundly, that its unity and force would suffer from their mergence. Accordingly, he has written a monograph, occupying half his volume, and has devoted the remaining half to a chronological register of poems. The latter is no mere bibliography. Under each title, Bond gives a statement of the theme and a summary of the plot or argument, quotes illustrative excerpts, and, finally, provides a candid estimate of its social and literary values. These valedictory critiques show judgment and perception, and, crisply phrased, furnish the reader very agreeable instruction.

The two chapters of the monograph which offer most of general interest, and which should, indeed, be read by all students of eighteenth century poetry, are the first and the last, the critical

chapters. Bond defines the burlesque as incongruous imitation, involving discrepancy between form and substance. In what, following Pope, he calls the magnifying variety, burlesque treats a trivial theme with an affected dignity; in the diminishing variety, it lowers the really serious or elevated by handling it jocularly or familiarly. Further subdivision, on the basis of the contrast between the particular and the general, gives the travesty, and the parody, the Hudibrastic poem and the mock-heroic. This chapter in definition really clarifies.

In the conclusion, Bond, assisted by a brilliant passage of Cazamian's explicates what might at first glance seem a paradox: the prevalence, in neo-classical age, of burlesque. As Bond ably puts it, this poetry "well illustrates the recurrent adjustment that literature makes—convention and revolt. The eighteenth century affords many evidences of this balance, this battle . . . The conservative attitude compelled an adherence to trusted subjects and recognized moulds and acknowledged forms [e.g., the epic], but the natural swing of the artistic pendulum caused a simultaneous reaction against the accepted . . . This combination of acceptance and rejection lies at the foundation of burlesque incongruity."

The intervening chapters, devoted to *The Rape of the Lock* (and the other famous works in the genre), to the four types of the burlesque, and to English translations of such celebrated Continental and Anglo-Latin poems as *Le Lutrin* and *Muscipula*, abound overmuch in *catenae* of quoted critical opinions. Abridgement of the number and length of the citations would improve some of these chapters; and the readability of chapters V and VI would have been enhanced had some of the long lists of titles, disfiguring the pages with their bracketed references to the Register, been removed to the footnotes.

Mr. Bond has an unaffected relish for his subject which appears to have carried him through protracted and exacting labors without more than the most brief surrenders of verve. His own writing betrays none of the stiffness, clumsiness, or bald naïveté which are sometimes supposed necessary concomitants of American scholarly productions. His style is easy without negligence, pungent without forced sprightliness, and exact without pedantry. He obviously likes to write as well as to study; and his scissors and pastepot never supplant or suppress his pen and his wits.

The century of which Mr. Bond has disserted feared, with suspicions not wholly unjust, 'enthusiasm', as name and as thing. And I must not conclude my observations without assuring the reader that, though Bond often approaches the verge of enthusiasm, he never topples over into that dire abyss. What the Augustans scanned with such suspicion was the uncritical and indiscriminating absorption in a cause, the vice of unbalance, unproportion, *hobbyolatry*. And from this vice Mr. Bond may be given his acquittal. He tempers his gusto with judiciousness; does not confound squirrels with mountains, or little fishes with portentous whales. He does not seek to magnify the importance of minor poems, forgotten or known only to their resurrecting specialist; he devotes most space and most praise to the masterpieces—to *The Rape* and *Hudibras* first, then to *The Splendid Shilling* and *A Pipe of Tobacco* and *The Schoolmistress*. Though he quotes copiously from 'the critics', he never forgets that he, too, is of the tribe, and voices endorsement or dissent with candor transcending that of researchers bound to the historical method.

Mr. Bond's book studies a literary genre through a period; Mr. Allen's treats, with equal fullness, an aspect of social history in the same period. His book has its utility for the literary student, for the clubs constituted an obvious and characteristic feature of Augustan London, and Augustan literature chiefly emanated from and mirrored the City. But in spite of a prefatorial declaration, "I have tried simply to analyze the relations between men of letters and the club life of Swift's time, to see how far a single social phenomenon affected the literature of an age famous for its preoccupation with manners", the reader feels that Mr. Allen failed to limit his chapters to the achievement of such a purpose. Much of the book has only the remotest connection with literature, except in that most catholic sense, betokened by quotemarks, in which the term covers religious tracts, political advertisements, and all manner of pamphletary. Chapters IV and V, discussing "The Club Framework in the Essay Periodicals" and "The Club and the Author", contain most from which the student of *belles-lettres* will profit. The last chapter gives an ably realistic statement of the part played by political patronage in the maintenance of literary men.

Mr. Allen has done a competent piece of work, based on careful research and adequately documented, a work to which the student of the period can refer with confidence. He writes a straightforward, unmannered style which, though never pointed or distinguished, is never careless and always clear. Whether such a dissertation constitutes a suitable diploma-piece for a Doctor in English some of us may doubt. One might read the whole book without suspecting that it had been penned by a man whose presumable function was to be that of teaching literature. This must not be taken as an indictment of Mr. Allen, who, for all the reviewer knows, spends his days and nights with Milton and Meredith. But is not something wrong with a system which supposes that scholarly method, applied to social history, qualifies its practitioner to interpret, for the young, the acknowledged masterpieces of our literature?

by Sedley Lynch Ware

SANS PEUR . . .

ROBERT E. LEE, by Douglas S. Freeman. Illustrated. Vol. I, 647 pp.; Vol. II, 621 pp. Charles Scribner's Sons. New York, 1934. \$7.50.

Among the obstacles encountered by anyone attempting to popularize accurate interpretations of great Americans, Professor Andrews of Yale in his recent work, the "Colonial Background of the American Revolution" (p. 175), enumerates the tendency of our people, alike in the North and the South, to envelop their heroes "in an atmosphere of piety, patriotism, and perfection". From a careful perusal of the two volumes before him, this reviewer can testify that Dr. Freeman has the impartial detachment of the scholar. "It may be", he writes, "that I shall irritate

some readers by restraint, and disappoint others by failure to answer some of Lee's detractors" (Foreword, XIII). To the first group of these critics he would reply: "the fame of no man is promoted by extravagant utterance". To the second group: "where biography becomes defence, it descends to special pleading and forfeits all confidence. The facts must speak for themselves" (Vol. II, 410).

In addition to his knowledge of the rules of the game, Dr. Freeman has pretty nearly every qualification which the writer of the long expected and definitive biography of Lee should possess. He has always, from youth up, had the love of military history, and in particular that of the Confederacy. He has an unflagging zeal for research, which has led him to explore far and wide, and to fill in many gaps in the printed sources concerning Lee and his activities. Some of this source material Dr. Freeman has himself published (*Lee's Despatches*, etc.). For these reasons he was called upon nearly twenty years ago to write the final and authoritative life of Lee, and recently was invited by the managers of the Dictionary of American Biography to contribute—*inter alia*—the article on Lee. Finally, and not least, Dr. Freeman has the literary qualifications of the good biographer. His pen carries his narrative along with lightness and with grace. Take this picture of Lee's men marching through Maryland to Sharpsburg, so vivid that it seems thrown upon a cinema screen:

Lank and lagging horses bore tattered riders ahead of the ragged columns of dirty, unshaven, and cadaverous infantrymen, neat in nothing but the well-tended rifles they carried. Scarcely a shining button or a trim uniform was to be seen, even in brigades the very names of whose officers had the ring of iron discipline. Hats hung in battered rims; shocks of hair stuck through the holes; caps had lost their color. Toes gaped from flapping shoes, and naked feet limped in protest at the hardness of Maryland's stony roads.

Is not this good literature as well as good history? Similar picturesque passages could easily be cited. We are tempted to congratulate the author on electing to remain in "Who's Who" a mere journalist. He has nothing in common with that coterie of ignorant specialists who preëempt little field-corners of history, nor with that clique of dry technicians reducing the art of Clío

to an esoteric science and infesting the pages of the *American Historical Review*.

Having spoken of the author, we approach the subject matter of the work itself. What qualities of Lee, what activities of his life should a biographer emphasize? There can be no doubt that what contributed to the shaping of the great Christian gentleman that he was should take precedence, while the training of the great military leader should take second place. Accordingly, the many biographers of Lee from both sections as well as all historians of the Mexican and Civil Wars, who have had occasion to speak of him, have praised his character. Forty years ago the Ohioan Rhodes (*History of the United States*, III, 299) wound up an eulogy of Lee with these words: "it may truly be said he walked with God." In fact Dr. Hosmer of Massachusetts (in his *Appeal to Arms*, 29) laments that: "one may search in vain for any defect in him. Indeed the perfection of Lee becomes somewhat oppressive. One would almost welcome the discovery of a shortcoming in him as redeeming him to humanity". The Bostonian, Gamaliel Bradford, in his popular *Lee the American* expresses himself in similar terms and deplors the "Lee legend". It is a commendable feature of Dr. Freeman's work that he devotes four hundred and seventy pages to this formative period of Lee's life preceding the Civil War. It is the period too on which we have been least informed.

As Lee comes out of the hands of his latest biographer there is nothing "oppressive" about his goodness. If he was without vices, if he did not curse, nor chew, not spit tobacco, nor smoke nor drink to excess nor even drink at all, he had redeeming foibles a-plenty, yes even some of the faults common to us all. The capacity to lose his temper, for instance. In his youth and long after his marriage he was sociable, pleasure-loving, and an ardent devotee of the ladies. "You are right in my interest in pretty women", Lee confided at the age of thirty-five to a friend, "it is strange that I do not lose it with age. But I perceive no diminution". As for that "grave, cold dignity of bearing", often noticed in after years by observers of Lee, it came shortly before the Civil War, says Dr. Freeman, by reason of "his distress over the threat to the Union, and his lack of sympathy with the extreme

policies proposed by many of those about him". "There is", continues our author, "no earlier comment on Lee's 'coldness'. On the other hand, his exuberance of spirit was often noted . . ." (Vol. I, 414-415). As for that famous letter allegedly written to his son Custis containing the passage: "Duty, then, is the sublimest word in our language", it is in all probability a forgery.

Dr. Freeman adds much to our previous knowledge of Lee's life at West Point, both as cadet (two chapters) and later as superintendent (two chapters). And one of the best portions of his fine biography deals with Lee's splendid achievements in the Mexican War. General Scott took an "almost idolatrous fancy" to the brilliant and audacious young engineer officer.

To call Lee a "traitor", because he resigned from the Federal army to follow his native Virginia in 1861, is to commit the worst of historical solecisms. Dean Herman Ames of the University of Pennsylvania has assembled in his *State Documents on Federal Relations* the documentary proof that "almost every State in the Union in turn declared its own sovereignty and denounced as almost treasonable similar declarations in other cases by other States". It is piquant to find there (Ames, l.c., 73), just sixteen years before Webster's Reply to Hayne, Massachusetts taking exactly that view of State sovereignty which Webster afterwards denounced South Carolina for holding.

Dr. Freeman's second volume brings the story of the Civil War down to the death of "Stonewall" Jackson, May 10, 1863. In evaluating Lee as a general, Freeman follows in the main—as indeed all must follow—the admirable appreciation of General Sir Frederick Maurice (*Lee, the Soldier*). Our biographer differs, however, from Maurice in his wealth of interesting details, in the far greater number of battle plans, sketches, and diagrams—a capital addition enabling the reader to follow with ease each strategic move. He differs, too, from Maurice in criticizing Lee more freely and more severely where he thinks censure is deserved. While we disclaim any knowledge of the art of war, we venture to believe that it will be difficult to invalidate many of Dr. Freeman's critiques of Lee's strategy. So well documented is the writer on all points.

In limiting his activities to the Virginia theatre of war, Lee

could not have acted otherwise. It seems to us that General Maurice has settled that point for all time. "The general direction of a war", he writes, "should be in the hands of one man, and in democratic countries that man must be a statesman". And, again; "The claim sometimes advanced that the soldier should be left in free and complete control is ridiculous".

The two volumes are profusely illustrated with war-time photographs beautifully reproduced, with facsimiles, charts, sketches and maps. We shall await with impatience the publication in the near future of the last two volumes.

by A. S. McIlwaine

GARNER OF AMERICAN FOLK SONG

AMERICAN BALLADS AND FOLK SONGS. By John A. and Alan Lomax: New York: Macmillan Co. 1934.

Since 1910, when Mr. J. A. Lomax published his pioneer volume, *Cowboy Songs*, it has become the fashion to "go American", to be "folksy". The ex-patriates are home again with their sad stories set down by Messrs. Stearns and Cowley. Our painters from the Left Bank of Paris are back and onto the coat-tails of Grant Wood and John Curry, while Thomas Craven castigates them bitterly. Even Gertrude Stein has, after more than a quarter of a century, become curious enough to visit the homefolks. America is an art vogue.

Yet this is encouraging as well as amusing. The faddists are discovering the solid work of quiet forerunners, who, for instance, in folk song have been rescuing our past in the music of the people. Until recently the "cultured" in America have associated folk music only with country louts who on Saturday-in-town

gawked into phonograph mouths to the "Death of Floyd Collins".

However, the intelligent native composers have long known better. Lamar Stringfield, head of the Institute of Folk Music at the University of North Carolina, several years ago won the Pulitzer Prize with his suite, "From the Southern Mountains", based on folk themes; last summer in Asheville, N. C., I heard this and his magnificent, "The Legend of John Henry" (*vide* Lomax, p. 3), played by his North Carolina Symphony, and at that time he told me of his writing with Paul Green an opera on the same negro hero. John Powell in "Country Fair" has, through folk tunes, given an American institution to musical art. The première in Asheville of C. G. Vardell's "Old Joe Clark Steps Out", a symphonic re-creation of an old breakdown (*vide* Lomax, p. 277), was a humorous triumph. David Guion's well-known resettings of Cowboy ballads and original pieces; Elizabeth Strickland's songs on French Louisiana themes; and other native composition attest the value to our music of American research in folk music, not to mention its enrichment of literature.

As the time is ripe—after twenty-five years of avid collecting—for a folksong garner, the appearance of *American Ballads and Folk Songs* by J. A. and Alan Lomax seemed to warrant high hopes. Its large, excellent format; its twenty-five sections containing 614 pages of songs, most of them with music; the pre-publication prestige of the Lomax name—all made it a publishing event. And yet it is a disappointment.

The initial and fundamental error of the editors was their plan—rather their lack of one. They wished the volume to be "a singing book" made by their "personal choice". Of course, one has a right to make any book in any way. My point is the wasted opportunity for doing a more excellent and serviceable work. With no more plan than this, the editors couldn't decide apparently, what to include. But even as a "singing book" it is hardly satisfactory. For that, they should have given us the best, most popular, most representative ballads. They haven't. For example, in the section, "Creole Negroes" (*Creole* is an amazing misnomer!), we are given tid-bits like "Salamgadon" (4 ll.), instead of rich songs like "Pauvre piti mam-selle Zizi"—which Mina Monroe published in *Bayou Ballads* (1921). A singing

book should have tried to popularize this little known body of French-flavored Negro ballads.

Perhaps the same desire to make a family folk-hymnal led to the inclusion of Willa Cather's graceful poem, "Spanish Johnny", because it happened to "sing itself" to the novelist, C. E. Scroggins, and to receive from him a musical setting. The editors by this token should, by all means, have allowed Edward F. Piper's "Sweetgrass Range" and others to sing themselves to someone and into a section called "Folk-Song Imitations". Further, the "Spanish traditional ballads" are squeezed out because of space; but the Spanish section, "Vaqueros of the Southwest", rides into their corral!

But at least one section—entirely unjustifiable as the title, "Miscellany", indicates—brilliantly succeeds in singing strength: it has provided Rudy Vallee with two radio favorites: "The Man on the Flying Trapeze" and "Ye Ballade of Ivan Petrovsky Skevar". Such editing, of course, logically leads to the tin-pan-alley compilations of Mr. Sigmund Spaeth. Moreover to waste thirty pages on "our yesterdays" in song-hits and adaptations, when more legitimate folk material cries for space is indeed regrettable. Certainly these thirty pages could have been used to add glory to several sections somewhat in need of augmentation: the mountains and the white spirituals, at least. And why did not the editors represent the river—the Mississippi especially—with chants, boat cries, and songs? On the banks, they did marvellously well in "The Levee Camp" (Section II). The sprightly French songs of the *voyageur* of the St. Lawrence and our northern rivers and lakes—for example, "En roulon ma boule", used for rhythm on canoe trips—would provide an excellent start. Where are the folk songs written during the great North Carolina cotton-mill strikes of 1929? Would not a section on industry have been of more value than a miscellany?

These objections are raised on the editors' own ground; I am not demanding a scholarly book, a result obviously impossible with the editors' procedure of making "composite ballads" from all the verses in hand. I am saying that they could not apparently decide whether to emphasize the most popular ballads and pseudo-ballads, the unfamiliar ones, or the unprinted ones of their dis-

covery. The result—it seems—was to use new pieces as far as possible and then to fill the sections with the other three sorts. These gentlemen should have made a songbook of the established American ballads and then another volume from the rich sources that they have recently tapped.

The real contribution of *American Ballads and Folk-Songs* is the rediscovery of an artificially created ballad group: the Southern prison farm and the chain gang. Of course, in 1926, Howard Odum and Guy Johnson first worked this mine; however, their ore was hardly pay dirt compared with the Lomax result. Here, negroes, segregated from the whites, serving long terms, are untouched by the outside, and must provide their own entertainment and consolation. That makes song. At Parchman, (Miss.) prison farm, the editors "struck it rich". Occasionally the negro men there are allowed "visitors", who have come to be symbolized by "Rosie", a dark Mademoiselle from Armentière, about whom the prisoners shout "all day long under the hot boiling sun of Parchman, Miss.":

If they mistreat me, tell you what I do
I'll cut dis steel, an' bring it home to you.
O Rosie, oho
O Rosie, oh, Lawd, gal.

One masterpiece, "Goin Home", a pick-song from the same prison, has genuine race-poetry and a perfect cumulative emotion and drama (composite or actual?). The prisoner receives letters from his mother, then his sister; soon his mother's voice tells him to "run, son, run", and he resolves to "break right past dat shooter". One stanza describes tired feet for all time:

I done walk till—hanh!
Walk till my feet's gone to rollin'—hanh!
Jes' like a wheel—hanh!
My Lawd, jes' like a wheel—hanh!
I'm goin' home, my Lawd, I'm goin' home!

The life of the convict—even in these ten songs—startles one with its implied and direct horrors. And why not? Several years ago, a negro at Parchman was barbarously mutilated and burned by a lynching mob. Within memory, convicts were leased to planters. Last year on a prison farm in Arkansas, convicts were substituted for mules. One song, "Great God A'Mighty", brings

to us with great actuality the convict's fear of the bull-whip and his agony while his fellow is being lashed: "Cancha hear the bully screamin?" The "nigger" glee of a successful escape fills "Long Gone":

He's long gone
He's Long John
He's gone, gone
Like a turkey through de corn.

The section, "The Levee Camp", is no less a daily-transcript, but inferior in quality. Rarely do lines like these—from "Levee Camp 'Holler'"—appear:

I got a clock in my stomach,
And a watch in my head
I'm agettin' superstitious 'bout my hog and bread.

But the levee worker's tough, bawdy life of cruel, early hours:

Who dat knockin' on de fo' day dong?
Mus' be Isum Lorantz, 'cause he don' knock long;

of his woman, Roberta, who "rolls her jelly"; of his longing for quitting time; and of his greatest trial, Billy, the mule that "sot down on de wagon tongue", has recorded itself with fine gusto in the ballad-chronicle of American living.

All in all, I can agree with Professor Kittridge, who says the buyer need not beware of this book; it can easily afford five dollars' worth of pleasure. And yet I have a tingle of quaint Whittier's feeling about what "might have been".

by Leonard Brown

THE MARXIST APPROACH TO LITERATURE

LITERATURE AND DIALECTICAL MATERIALISM. By John Strachey. New York: Covici, Friede. 1934. Pp. 54.

Mr. Strachey's brief essay is the revised and enlarged text of a lecture delivered, under the title of *Literature and Fascism*, before the John Reed Club of New York. Although one does not

know what Granville Hicks makes of Mr. Strachey (since he is reproved judiciously by the latter for some of the least watertight judgments in *The Great Tradition*), I think we may safely regard this essay as a kind of *ex cathedra* pronouncement by the Marxists in the field of literary criticism.

Mr. Strachey begins with the conventional attack upon Fascism as the last demon of a tottering capitalist world, and of course he has no difficulty in showing the inherent irrationality of the Nazi psychosis. Fascism's success he attributes to the general sickness of contemporary thought and culture, which are consequently easy prey to the mailed fist. But there is one new synthesis, the particular object of Fascist virulence, which refuses to be destroyed—dialectical materialism.

Dialectical materialism is not discontinuous with pre-existing human culture, but is a direct product of the tradition which came to birth with the Renaissance, of Western bourgeois culture in other words, the 'most brilliant . . . cultural system which the human race has so far achieved.' In the nineteenth century, however, with Ricardo and Hegel as the last of its giants, bourgeois culture fell sick and reached an *impasse* beyond which it could not extend itself. Then appeared the two physicians Marx and Engels, who diagnosed the patient and prescribed the way forward out of the *cul-de-sac*—dialectical materialism. A small minority accepted the Marxist challenge to revolution, but most of the bourgeois world rejected the prescription and flowed on into agnosticism and reactionary mysticism, into bourgeois decadence.

Proust, Joyce, Mann and Lawrence are bourgeois and decadent, unequal to Racine, Goethe and Shakespeare. Everybody senses this disparateness, but only dialectical materialism enables us to understand it. Briefly, Proust *et al* are 'part of existing civilization; and bourgeois civilization is in headlong decline.' Hence the disparateness between Proust and Racine, Mann and Goethe, Lawrence and Shakespeare. But Proust *et al* are not to be censured; indeed they are to be praised for rendering so honestly the order of which they are a part. In short, 'bourgeois' is not a term of abuse but only of description.

Our contemporary bourgeois decadents Mr. Strachey divides into two groups, those who reflect the 'Fascist Unconscious', and those of the world-weary school, the Nihilists. MacLeish's poem

"Frescoes for Mr. Rockefeller's City . . ." is Fascist poetry. This attack upon the Big Bankers will be condoned by Wall Street for the sake of the companion attacks upon immigrants, workers and Jews, and for the strong patriotic flavor of the poem as a whole—the very raw materials of Fascism in the bud. "Blissfully unconscious that he is a fascist" Mr. MacLeish is set down by Mr. Strachey as being 'on the wrong side of the fence', and one of the graceful feminine poems of Mr. Spender ("The Pylons") is urged as a satisfactory (though I'm afraid unsatisfying) antidote.

As representatives of the second group of contemporary bourgeois decadents, the world-weary Nihilists, Mr. Strachey posits Mr. Krutch as apologist and Mr. Hemingway as a ranking creative artist. This school has inherited perhaps the greatest tradition, the tragic view of life, but in their hands it has degenerated to a sense of despair and finally to a mere sense of depression. Mr. Krutch's rejection of Communism as being unable to solve the 'permanent human predicament in the universe' (the problem of Death for example), Mr. Strachey urges as evidence of the Nihilism of this school. Likewise Mr. Hemingway's anti-revolutionism, which is traced to a fundamental love of death and terror (i.e. Hemingway dislikes Communism because it gives people life and bread, and life and bread are no good; only death is good). With all respect to Mr. Strachey's abilities, one feels that his suave discussion of the world-weary school is the most imperfect section of his essay. Perhaps it is a matter of the space at his disposal; on the other hand, perhaps it is a defect of dialectical materialism itself. Is there, for example, a Capitalist way of feeling about Death, a Proletarian way, a Feudal way?

The essay closes with a plea to Marxists that they treat gently those creative artists who are 'broadly' on the workers' side of the fence, however faulty their politics; but with the added behest that Marxists be inordinately strict with fellow Marxists, not only as politicians but also as writers.

On the whole Mr. Strachey's case is all the more persuasive in that it avoids the rabidity too often apparent in the Evangelicals of the party which he represents. Dialectical materialism is unquestionably a complement to the tradition of criticism. This essay is the best short introduction to the method which this reviewer knows.

by George H. Ryden

MARYLAND HISTORY

THE FOUNDING OF MARYLAND. By Matthew Page Andrews, Litt. D. (Baltimore: The Williams and Wilkens Company; New York: D. Appleton-Century Company. 1933. Pp. XII, 367.)

Although histories of single American colonies and states have appeared from time to time during the past century, it has only been in recent years that professional historians have concerned themselves with local history. Hitherto such fields have been left to any amateur to exploit, who professed an interest in genealogy, biography, or mere anecdotes and traditions. This neglect of local history by the professional historians was partly due of course to their preoccupation with the study of the more general developments within the American nation as a whole, but the reviewer of this volume suspects that the main reason was the lack of printed records. There have, however, been notable exceptions. The fact that several good histories of Maryland have been written in past years, is mostly due without doubt to the existence of a very enterprising State Historical Society in Maryland, which ever since 1881 has been engaged in publishing the Archives of that State, the latest volume being the fiftieth.

Dr. Andrews' book continues the good record of historical writers in Maryland. If anything, the author has improved upon the others by limiting his narrative to a detailed treatment of a fairly definite period of the colonial development of his State, namely, from the planning of the colony's projector, to the year 1692, when the colony was brought under royal control. The author has made liberal use of the Maryland Archives, and has drawn as well upon other reliable sources.

The book under review comprises fifteen chapters. Copious bibliographical references for each chapter appear in a separate section after the last chapter of the text. This section is followed by an interesting appendix containing short biographical sketches of George Calvert, Cecil Calvert, and Charles Calvert, the first,

second, and third Lord Baltimore, respectively. A thirteen-page index at the end of the book adds much to its usefulness. The work, furthermore, contains eight illustrations, one, a map, showing the ocean route of the *Ark* and the *Dove*, and another, a historical map of St. Mary's County. Reproductions of authoritative oil portraits of George Calvert and of his two sons, Cecil and Leonard, enhance the value of the book.

In chapter one, entitled "Origins," the author describes some of the commercial and literary activities of the English people just before and at the time George Calvert conceived the idea of planting a colony in the New World where complete tolerance would prevail. Chapter two, entitled "The First Venture", is concerned with George Calvert's abortive settlement of Avalon on the island of Newfoundland. The story of the granting of the charter for Maryland is told in chapter three, followed in the fourth chapter by a narration of the voyage of the *Ark* and the *Dove*. The founding of the colony is told in chapter five and in the sixth chapter the author discusses the "Problems of Self-Government". The celebrated Calvert-Claiborne controversy occupies the attention of the author in the seventh chapter, and in the next he tells the story of "Invasion and Recovery." Indian troubles between the years 1639 and 1649 are recounted in chapter nine. The Toleration Act of 1649, for which Maryland has been justly famous, is discussed in a masterly fashion in chapter ten, entitled "Freedom of Conscience". The author makes the point that the Calverts, George and Cecil, clearly foresaw that religious freedom "could be achieved only through the simultaneous adoption of its complement, the separation of church and state."

The next two chapters of Dr. Andrews' work relate to "Economic and Social Problems," and "The Puritan Regime," followed by a chapter dealing with the controversy with the Dutch and later with William Penn concerning the ownership of the lands along the western shore of lower Delaware River and of Delaware Bay. The concluding two chapters tell of political reaction in the province and of the subsequent loss of the charter by Charles Calvert, the third Lord Baltimore.

The appearance of the book in 1933 was opportune in view of the tercentenary celebration that year of the founding of the

Province. Although written primarily for the popular reader in connection with the celebration, the author has nevertheless expertly brought together and arranged many new facts, and for the historical scholar has afforded "a fresh perspective" of one of the most interesting experiments in colonial government and in economic organization on American soil.

by Eugene M. Kayden

AN EXERCISE IN EVASIONS

THE METHOD OF FREEDOM. By Walter Lippmann. New York: The Macmillan Company. 1934. Pp. 117.

Mr. Lippmann is opposed to a planned economy under a socialist or authoritarian state. He recognizes the failure of the capitalist profit-motivated system to distribute the abundance of industry and to bring peace and security to the masses. He admits that laissez-faire is untenable as a working conception of economic life, but he maintains that a free nation with a highly-developed economy may by the employment of a "compensatory method" balance, equalize, neutralize, correct, offset the private judgments of masses of individuals striving after individual gain. By this principle society will prolong and maintain the régime of liberty, correcting the evils of private enterprise by collective action of the State. Collectivism is indeed upon us; but we must choose between the absolute form of it under a fascist or communist state and the free form of it under a democracy anxious to save its liberties. Apparently, there is no limit to interference with business under a collective compensatory economy: The State must overcome the disorders of capitalism, remedy its

abuses, correct its errors, repress its crude individualism in the use of property rights, prevent fraud and monopoly, equalize bargaining power, and through taxation and the regulation of credit influence the very rhythm of capitalism. In other words, Mr. Lippmann does not mind to strangle this capitalist civilization of ours, but it could be done properly and decently by a liberal friend only, and not at all by upstart fascists or communists. Mr. Lippmann raises no issue as to the contingency of security under a profit system, and of state protection of the standards of life under private enterprise. We must accept his unproved asseveration that the authoritarian régime is fatal to the spiritual life, but that the arbitrating and all-regulating state of compensatory economy will preserve and maintain our liberty and spiritual well-being. He links together the system of planned economy of the Soviet Union and the police-state of Italy; he confuses the relationship that exists between a German fascism and a capitalism in deep distress; he assumes that a state can transcend the particularism of economic groups; he passes over the relationship that exists between our modern capitalism and war for markets; he assumes that the middle class is the only carrier of liberal traditions, and that the capitalist system under the American flag can be reformed in a world of doomed capitalist systems. Mr. Lippmann has raised high the torch of liberty, crying afar that the state is the servant of the people, but he does not see far into the life surging about him. The people, true enough, have ever the need of light and leadership, but can it be the leadership of unseeing philosophers and statesmen?